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Imagery in
THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

श्री गणेश वर्णी दि. जैन (शोध) संस्थान
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नरिया, (का. हि. वि. वि.) वाराणसी-5

Sudhisankar Bhattacharya

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ग्रन्थ-कार्ड

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ग्रन्थागार

नरिया, वाराणसी-५

ग्रन्थ नाम Imagery in Jain Maha Bharata

लेखक Sudhishankar Bhattacharya

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IMAGERY IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Influence on later Sanskrit Literature

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38 Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta-6

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Copyright : Author

First Edition, February 1971

Price : Rs. 15·00/30sh/$4·00

Cover Design : Phani Saha.

Published by Shyamapada Bhattacharyya from Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 38 Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta-6
Printed by Paran Chandra Ray, Sonnet Printing Works, 4/C Iswar Mill Lane, Calcutta-6

to my father

Sri Dharanisankar Bhattacharyya

in

affection and admiration

On this occasion The author gratefully remembers his mother late Kamalasundari Devi but for whose affectionate care and guidance he would not have been what he is to-day !

FOREWORD

Poetical image is of profound importance in poetry, since the ingredients involved in the image and the dexterity in welding these tissues bear testimony to the supreme genius of the creative artist, responsible for the genesis of the image. The part played by the poetical image in attainment of poetical experience as also in the expansion of ego-boundaries, has been dilated upon by ancient Indian theoriticians, most of whose speculations are couched in terse and cryptic language. The image introduced through the poetic figure extends to the reader an opportunity of being conducted to the whole universe, as a result of which his self love is brought in consummation. Though the image satisfies the self love of the appreciator and is regarded as of paramount importance in the poetic texture, as yet no serious attempt has been made to analyse the components of the image and to make a close study of the talent of the creative artist, that effects integration of images.

It is a pleasure to find Dr. Sudhisankar Bhattacharyya, the author of the present dissertation devoting himself to this difficult task of analysing the characteristic features of the living poetic image, that captivates the receptive mind with its radiance. A successful poetic image is marked by freshness and audicity, as also by its bearing upon the emotive-content. From old components the genius of the poet builds up a fresh image, which remains modern for all time to come, and is relished by the appreciative mind as such. The logic of emotion gulfs the bridge between the distant islands of components, contained in the image, as a result of which the divergence between the ideas does not become noticeable to the receptive comprehender. Ānandavardhana, the brilliant exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani enunciates the principles relating to the use of the poetic figure in poetry, and it is refreshing to see the author finds out a new interpretation according to the technique of Western Aesthetics in them.

Though the Mahābhārata is regarded as a whole literature, obtaining its present form through centuries, a continuity of meaning is clearly tracable between the beginning, the middle and the end of the epic ; and the touch of a brilliant poetic talent is evident in the art of arranging the incidents, forming a part and parcel of the epic. It is not without justification therefore that Indian tradition regards the epic as a unified poem, composed by the great seer Vyāsa. Dr. Bhattacharyya makes a bold attempt to arrest this continuum of meaning and to present the conflict of values, reflected in the epic. But the Mahābhārata is not simply a work intended to instruct the public : it is as good a specimen of poetic art as its counter-part,—the Rāmāyaṇa, and it is because of its greatness and voluminous character, that is called the Mahābhārata. Consequently the poetic image of the Mahābhārata deserves a close and careful study, which no student of the evolution of the Indian thought can afford to ignore. The art of Vālmīki differs from the art of Vyāsa, and while Vālmīki sees the universe through the eyes of his characters, Vyāsa looks at it through his own eyes, as a result of which the paintings of Nature assume different shapes in the two works.

As the social texture grows complex, the vision of man changes. The Vedic Aryan looks at the ocean with great awe and reverence ; Vyāsa's mind is astonished to notice its splendour and wealth ; Kālidāsa conceives of it as a gift from the supreme creator, who draws chief attention of the poet ; the poet of comparatively late period casts a sarcastic fling at the opulence of the ocean, which is not in a position to quench the thirst of the thirsty. What is true of the ocean, holds good of the river and the mountain,—the man and the nature. The concept of man also changes through the ages, and while the poets of ancient times unfold the simplicity and roughness of the unsophisticated man, the poets of comparatively modern period try to present through the garb of soft and ornamented language the indignation of the furious and the straightforwardness of the soft. Dr. Sudhisankar Bhattacharyya has traced this evolution of the image through the ages, and has been successful in showing the track through which a simple and bold image of the Mahābhārata proceeds, undergoing transformation, and ultimately blossoms forth into a brilliant poetic image in the creations of a master artist. As a guide to the salient traits of a living poetical image, the work perhaps is the only work, based on the speculations of ancient Indian thinkers. I am sure by its freshness and flavour, depth of content and power of analysis, the work will be savoured by all lovers of literature.

Ramaranjan Mukherji,
Vice-Chancellor,
Burdwan University,
Burdwan.

Burdwan, Rajbati
25.12.70

PREFACE

The Mahābhārata is regarded as the store-house of political wisdom,—the repository of philosophical doctrine,—the container of religious dogma,—and at the same time, a specimen of literary art, exercising tremendous influence on diffe-rent forms and patterns of -subsequent literary compositions in Sanskrit. Though much has been discussed on the political and economic, the philosophical and ethical concepts, presented in the Mahābhārata, no attempt practically has been made so far to assess the literary value of this literary-monster. Notwithstanding the observations of Western-critics that, the Epic is an accumulation of poems and episodes of diverse value, it is capable of being regarded as a brilliant document of literary art, in which the diverse poems are linked by the common bond of the Quietistic. As a matter of fact, Ānandavardhana, the great exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani regards the Epic as an outward manifestation of the Quietistic in the same manner as its counter-part the Rāmāyaṇa, which is the revelation of the Tragic.

The present monograph, accepted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Jadavpur University represents the results of researches carried on in the field of Sanskrit literature, with reference to the two great Epics in particular. It starts from evolution of the concept of Poetry, and presents the characteristic features of different poetical elements, recognised in the speculations of literary critics. The poetical image is of paramount importance in Poetry ; and while in the hand of a successful artist the image comes out in flying colours as a living one, the same, when handled by a poetaster appears as a bundle of broken paintings. The poetical image, therefore, is to be inserted in accordance with certain norms, set forth carefully by the critical mind. In order to evaluate the Mahābhārata as a document of literary art, it becomes incumbent on the connoisseur to make a comparative estimate of the images introduced in the two great Epics of Indian literature,—the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. The comparison yields spendid results since it throws much light on the difference in approach between Vālmīki and Vyāsa. The analysis of the actual images introduced in the Mahābhārata reveals the indebtedness of the poets of posterity to Vyāsa, so far as the technique of painting the actions of outer world and the passions of human heart is concerned. The adaptation of these poetical images by later poets deserves unstinted praise, because the adopted form sometimes becomes so unique that, it completely overshadows the original. The transformation which paintings of nature and images of human heart, receives at the hands of Kālidāsa and poets of lesser importance of comparatively modern age is a superb illustration to the point. The thesis makes a modest attempt to analyse the representative poetical images of Vyāsa, as also to discuss the modifications of these in subsequent literary compositions.

The author takes opportunity of expressing his warmest gratitude to his Guru Dr. Ramaranjan Mukherji under whose supervision he had the privilege of carrying on research and preparing his thesis for the Ph. D. degree of the Jadavpur University. The author expresses his profound sense of gratitude to his learned teachers Dr. Gopikamohan Bhattacharyya, Dr. Sitanath Goswami, Dr. Sukumari Bhattacharyya, Sri Hemanta kumar Ganguli, Dr. Debranjan Mukherjee and Sri Nirmalkanti Basu, as also to his colleagues Sri Gopaldas Roy, Principal, Rishi Bankim chandra College, Naihati, Dr. Bhabaniprasad Bhattachryya, Sri Manik chandra Bhattacharyya, Sri Anil kumar Mukherjee, Sm. Bithika Bhattacharyya and Sri Paritosh Banerjee for constant encouragement which they offered to him at the time of preparing the thesis. Mention is to be made further of the pleasing service rendered by the members of his family Sri Krishnasankar

Bhattacharyya, Sri Himadrisankar Bhattacharyya, Sri Hirendrasankar Bhattacharyya, Sri Joysankar Bhattacharyya, Sri Anupendranarayan Bhattacharyya, Sri Priyasankar Bhattacharyya, Sm. Rajatbala Bhattacharyya, Sm. Sadhana Bhattacharyya, Sm. Sri Bhattacharyya, Sm. Gayatri Bhattacharyya, Sm. Dipa Bhattacharyya, Sm. Basanti Bhattacharyya and Sm. Shelley Bhattacharyya, whose warmest wishes are responsible to a great extent for the successful completion of the work. Thanks are due to his friends Sri Pabitra Sengupta, Sri Pradyotkumar Goswami, Sri Kanailal Chakraborty, Sri Pabitrakumar Bhattacharyya, Sri Swaminath Pandey and Juniors Sri Ranjitkesh Chakraborty, Sri Brajaraj Ghosh and Sri Gopalchandra Ghosh, who have constantly enquired of the progress of his work and have enabled him to sustain his flair for research. The revered elders of the author Sri Ramasankar Smṛtitirtha, Sri Manomohan Bhattacharyya, Sri Jagadindrasankar Bhattacharyya, Sri Brahmasankar Bhattacharyya and Sri Ksirodebehari Choudhury kindled his imagination for taking up higher research by their valued advice and warmest blessings, and words fail to express the magnitude of his indebtedness to them.

Sm. Jharna Bhattacharyya, the wife of the present writer and his brother's wives Sm. Niva Bhattacharyya and Sm. Sujata Bhattacharyya have always tried to keep him away from the exacting cares of the house-hold and this has enabled the work to see the light of the day so soon. The book, therefore, is indebted to a great extent to these embodiments of womanly virtues, that are going so rare in modern times. Sm. Arati Mukherji, the wife of his supervisor deserves special mention in this thanks-giving list. It is she who rescued the drooping spirit of the author by her affectionate greetings and dainty dishes each time he approached his guide for direction and advice.

The author is thankful further to the Publishers M/S Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, whose young and energetic Proprietor Sri Syamapada Bhattacharyya is trying to put Bengal high up in the list of sites for Oriental Publications by his new presentations of editions and studies.

The work does not put forward any claim to profoundity. It makes for the first time a humble and honest attempt to make an assessment of the literary value of the Epic Mahābhārata, by comparing the approach of Vyāsa with that of Vālmīki, Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Śrīharṣa, Amaru and poets of subsequent age of diverse literary merit. How far it has succeeded in evaluating the poetical worth of the work, it is for the connoisseur to judge. The humble writer of the work simply presents it to the bar of the academic world.

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Sudhisankar Bhattacharyya

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IMAGERY IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

IMAGERY IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

CHAPTER I

POETICAL IMAGE—ITS FUNCTIONS

I

Introduction—Image in Pre-Dhvani Systems

From very early times attempt has been made to define Poetry, but the thing of definition has eluded all comprehensible definitions. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to formulate a clear-cut definition of poetry, free from all possible fallacies, since much of poetry depends on appeal; and appeal differs from person to person. As a result of this difference in appeal, poetry also changes from man to man; and a composition, which is appreciated as a literary product by one is not relished as poetry by another. A portion of history may be experienced as poetry by one, while another person may be reluctant to recognise it as a specimen of art, at all. Even the portions of the single composition produce different reactions in the mind of the same experiencer, who accepts one portion as a literary product and the other as simple presentation of cut and dried fact.

A probe however into the different attempts to enunciate the definition of poetry is interesting: it is necessary also in order to ascertain the importance of the figurative illustrations in poetry. The earliest Ālaṃkārika Bharata does not give any definition of poetry; he simply says that dramatic composition, capable of being understood by all and composed in charming expressions, suggestive of feelings and replete with dance and music reaches a high water-mark and is experienced with delight by all connoisseurs[1]. By maintaining in this manner Bharata underlines the importance of the charming expressions in poetry ; he does not feel the necessity of introducing images in his dramatic creation, because the drama is one that is fit to be represented on the stage, and consequently the spectator finds all the factors necessary for aesthetic realisation before him as he witnesses to a theatrical performance. Of course, he is acquainted with the techinique of creating images through charming expressions, or in other words the technique of giving figurative illustrations, which are accepted by his successors as important elements in poetry.

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[1] Mṛdulalitapadāḍhyaṃ gūḍhośabdārthabīnaṃ Janapadasukhabodhyaṃ
yuktimannṛtyayojyam/Vahukṛtarasamārgaṃ sandhisandhānayuktam
Sa bhavati śubhakāvyaṃ nāṭakapreaṣakāṇām

—Nāṭyaśāstra. XVI. 118.

The technique of presenting images with the help of expression deserves consideration, though it is as old as the morning of mankind. The Vedic seer gives a number of fine landscape paintings, keeping in tune with which it is possible for an artist to paint with colour and brush. He ascribes further the attribute of one to another, thereby giving evidence to his poetic bent of mind, which is characterised by the art of describing one thing in term of another. In the Ṛgveda the blazing fire is conceived of as a being possessing human frame : Agni is flame-haired, butter-tongued, master of the house, protecting the house-hold from all dangers. The expressions used by the Vedic poets bring into full relief the images of the fire or the sun as the case may be ; and in building up these images,the expressions play a prominent role. It is but natural for a word to present an image, since the meaning itself conveyed by the word resides in the form of an idea in the intellect of the comprehender. Words, the Grammarian philosophers maintain, do not refer to things, as they reside in the external world, but to things as they reside in the realm of our intellect[2]. This, they continue, is demonstrated by the fact that the words Vandhyāsūta, Śaśaśṛṅga etc. meaning a 'barren woman's son' and 'the rabbit's horn' are regarded as Prātipadikas or significant stems. Neither the son of a barren woman nor the horn of a rabbit actually exist in the empirical world; when verbal expressions are given to them, they assume forms as it were, and appear in full robustness in the realm of our intellect. The intellectual character of the meaning is demonstrated further by the expression 'Ghaṭaḥ asti', meaning the jar exists, were the word Asti signifies the existence in the out side world of a thing, which corresponds exactly to the idea of the jar which one has in his mind. The expression thus refers to ideas, and it is no wonder that an expression used by the poet presents unfamiliar images.

---

[2] Bauddhya evārtha śakyaḥ. Padamapi sphoṭātmakaṃ prasiddhameva. Tayostādāmyam. —Paramalaghumañjūṣā

Ancient Indians conceive of the expression as highest luminosity,—luminosity par excellence which keeps the order of things going.[3] The expression is so powerful that gives a tangible form, as it were to the unreal and takes away reality from the real even. The son of a barren woman does not actually exist; but when the expression a barren woman's son is used, the image of such a son emerges in our mind, and we take him as a real entity. In a similar manner when the face is compared to the lotus or is conceived of as veritable moon itself, the similarity of the moon belonging to the face or its identity with the latter, which is definitely an unreal entity appears as a real thing. This shows reality is given by the expression, which signifies a meaning that is intellectual in construction. By recognising the importance of the expression, Bharata simply takes note of the part played by the expression in creation of images. At the hands of his successors the images themselves acquire prominence, and are regarded as of vital importance, without which poetic expression cannot be regarded as poetry at all.

Bhāmaha, the successor of Bharata in the realm of Indian poetics recognises the importance of the Alaṃkāra, without which, as he says, no poetry is regarded as poetry in the strictest sense of the term. The face of the beloved though charming does not look beautiful, when devoid of ornaments ; in a similar manner, the poetic texture loses much of its charm, when it remains unembellished. Bhāmaha takes note of the classification of the Alaṃkāra into two categories—the Śabdālaṃkāra and the Arthālaṃkāra—the verbal figure and the ideational figure, and he cites the view points of those thinkers who prefer the first category to the second as also to the view points of those who prefer the second to the first. In conclusion, the learned Ālaṃkārika maintains that the verbal and the ideational, both are necessary for infusing charm into the body of poetry, and none can do without the other.[4] A successful image is brought into being not only by the ideational figure, but by the verbal one also ; and the expression-element does not play an insignificant part in building up a poetic image. An analysis of the creations of the master artists testifies to the veridity of the statement. As a matter of fact, Kālidāsa relies both on the sound-effect and the sense-effect in order to bring into being the images in the Meghadūta,—the images that are regarded as finest specimens of poetic image. The city of Ujjayinī through which the cloud is advised to proceed appears as if a fraction of heaven brought into the earthly region by the denizens of the heavenly abode ; through it the river Śiprā flows, the breeze associated with this river puts an end the fatigue of ladies and behaves like the lover : in its journey it lengthens the sweet cackling of the cranes and becomes surcharged with the fragrance of the full blown lotus in the morning. In conformity to the cackling of the cranes lengthened by the breeze, the sound also is lengthened ; and the long movement of the stanza creates an astounding effect in the mind of the reader.[5] Bhāmaha realises this problem, and by recognising the utility of the verbal and the indeational figure, he extends recognition to both the expression-element and content-element, which are equally necessary for the construction of the poetic image.

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[3] Vācāmevā prasādena lokayātrā pravarttate. —Kāvyādarśa.

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[4] Rūpakādimalaṃkāraṃ bāhyamācakṣate pare /
Supāṃ tiṅgāṃ Ca Vyutpattiṃ Vācāṃ Vāñchatyalaṃkṛtim //
Tadetadāhuḥ sauśabdyaṃ nārthavyutpattirīdṛśĪ /
Sabdābhidheyālamkārabhedādiṣṭaṃ dvyaṃ tu naḥ //
—Kāvyālaṃkāra. I. 14-15.

At the hands of Daṇḍin, the literary excellence and the poetic figure receive practically equal recognition. He does not draw a line of demarcation between the two, but simply states that while the literary excellence is peculiar to Vaidarbha type of diction, the poetic figure is common to both the Vaidarbha and the Gauḍîya. The list of the literary excellences as drawn by Daṇḍin contains attributes belonging to the sound, as also qualities belonging to sense, which again shows the importance of both the sound and the sense in creation of poetry. The excellence of Śleṣa heads the list; and an analysis reveals this excellence as pertaining clearly to the sound-element. The attribute of Samādhi which occurs in the bottom of the list, on the other hand, is a quality belonging to the sense-element since it consists in ascription to an object of an attribute, that does not originally belong to it.[6] The excellence of Ojas which consists in abundant use of compounds similarly is an attribute belonging to the sound-element, while the quality of Kānti consists in presentation of an object in such a way, that it does not transcend the ordinary limit is an excellence belonging to the sound and the sense-element as constituting the essence of literary composition according to the followers of the Vaidarbha type of diction, Daṇḍin practically extends recognition to the conjoint action of the expression and the content in bringing a successful image into being.

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[5] Dīrghīkurvan paṭumadakalaṃ Kūjitaṃ sārasānām
Pratyūṣeṣu Sphuṭitakamalāmodamaitrīkaṣāyaḥ/
Yatra strīṇāṃ harati surataglānimaṅgānukūlaḥ
Śiprāvataḥ priyatama iba prārthanācāṭukāraḥ//
—Meghadūtam, Śl. 31.

[6] Śliṣṭamaspṛṣṭaśaithilyamalpaprāṇākṣarottaram/
Śithilaṃ mālatīmālālolālikalilā yathā//
Anyadharmastato'nyatra lokasīmānurodhinā/
Samyagādhīyate yatra sa samādhiḥ smṛto yathā//
—Kāvyādarśa—1, 43, 93.

This attitude of Daṇḍin becomes all the more clear in his analysis of the literary excellence of Mādhurya and the poetic figure of Rasavat. He conceives of Mādhurya as Rasa itself, and asserts that Rasa pertains to both expression and content.[7] The term Rasa here is used however not in its technical sense to convey which it is employed by post-Dhvani writers: here it conveys loosely the sense of flavour or appeal, and when Daṇḍin says that Rasa belongs to expression and content, he means this that appeal pertains to expression and content, or in other words the appealing character of the sound and the sense is responsible for charmingness in poetry. In this connection, the learned critic introduces a dissertation, a particular variety of which is supposed to render the expression-portion charming. Charm in the content-portion, it is said is infused by all the Alaṃkāras, but it is implanted to the greatest extent by the absence of vulgarity. The statement of Daṇḍin is of profound importance for the student of the evolution of the concept of poetry, because it shows clearly Daṇḍin's views on the relation existing between the Alaṃkāra and the Rasa, and the part played by the former in a specimen of literary art. The idea that the developed form of a permanent mood attains the status of Rasa finds expression in the observation of Daṇḍin on the poetic figure of Rasavat, which is defined by him as one indicative of an emotional mood. In exemplifying this figure, Daṇḍin cites eight verses, each of which is supposed to delineate a permanent mood. Depiction of this permanent feeling, Daṇḍin thinks, makes a specimen of poetic art charming, and it is for this reason that he extends recognition to Rasavat as a poetic figure, and an important one. In his attempt to draw the line of demarcation between the scope of Mādhurya and that of Rasavat, Daṇḍin asserts that, Rasa described in connection with Mādhurya springs from absence of vulgarity, while that described in connection with Rasavat arises from delineation of permanent feeling. An expression free from indecorousness thus coupled with a charming content in the shape of a permanent feeling makes up a specimen of successful literary art.[8]

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[7] Madhuraṃ rasavatvāci Vastunyapi rasasthitiḥ/
Yena mādyanti dhīmanto madhuneva madhubratāḥ/
—Kāvyādarśa I. 51.

Vāmana, a successor of Daṇḍin in the field of poetics poses for the first time the question—what constitutes the soul of poetic art,—in furnishing to reply to which he says that this is represented really by the Rīti or the poetic diction. This diction is explained by him as a peculiar type of composition, the peculiarity or particularity wherein is brought into being through arrangement of literary excellences. Thus the All India standard poetic diction of Vaidarbha is created through combination of all the literary excellences, recognised in the speculations of earlier thinkers: the Gauḍīya or that followed by the poets belonging to the eastern region is created through the association of Ojas and Kānti, while the style entitled Pāñcālī is brought into being through juxtaposition of Mādhurya and Saukumāryya. This assertion of Vāmana assigns a very important place to the literary excellence, since the Rīti constituting the essence of poetic art, as envisaged by him is made up of the Guṇas or the literary excellences. Vāmana nevertheless recognises the importance of Alaṃkāras, some of which are given a detailed treatment in his work. At the outset he maintains that poetry becomes relishable through Alaṃkāra, (Kāvyaṃ grāhyamalaṃkārāt)—a statement, in explaining which he points out to the new connotation of the term Alaṃkāra. The expression referred to above is likely to the idea that poetry becomes acceptable through the poetic-figure, or in other words, it is the poetic-figure, the presence of which transforms an ordinary expression into the flower of poetic-expression. In his endeavour to retain the importance of the Rīti, as recognised in his scheme, Vāmana however does not explain the expression in this way. He takes recourse of subterfuge and says that the term Alaṃkāra does not refer to the poetic-figure, but to the concept of abstract charm. When it is asserted that poetry becomes relishable through Alaṃkāra, what is really meant is that poetry is rendered worth the name through association with charm or beauty,—a concept which is extremely difficult to comprehend[9]. This explanation of the term Alaṃkāra, as furnished by Vāmana helps us to justify the discussion on a number of topics, contained in the extent treatises on the Alaṃkāra. The Guṇa is as much a means of embellishment as the Alaṃkāra, and such is the case with Rīti or the diction. Rasa, that receives all-absorbing attention from the writers belonging to the Dhvani-school is another such element, which donates supernatural charm to a specimen of literary art. Beauty of poetry is dependent moreover on the absence of the literary blemish, since this blemish stands in the way of aesthetic realisation by distracting the mind of the refined appreciators and thereby makes poetry lifeless and unattractive. Possibly taking all these into consideration, the learned writers of Indian poetics discuss in their works the nature of the Guṇa, the Alaṃkāra, the Rīti, the Rasa, the Doṣa etc.,—the factors whose presence or absence leads to charm in poetry.

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[8] Kāmaṃ Sarvo 'pyalaṃkāro rasamarthe niṣiñcati /
Tathā' pyagrāmyataivainaṃ bhāraṃ vahati bhūyasā //
Śabde 'pi grāmyatā' styeva sā sabhyetarakīrttanāt /
Yathā yakārādipadaṃ ratyutsavanirūpaṇe //
—Kāvyādarśa I. 62, 65

Though Vāmana cleverly explains the term Alaṃkāra as conveying the idea of beauty in general, in order to show the importance of his favourite Rīti, practically three-fourth of his work is devoted to a treatment of the Alaṃkāra or the actual poetic-figure. The poetic-figure, inspite of the attempts made by the Ālaṃkārikas to assign an inferior status to it continues to be one of the chief attractions of poetry,—an element without which there can be no poetry at all. This importance of the poetic-figure makes itself felt from the very designation for the particular branch of learning—the designation of Alaṃkāra-śāstra. It is said that designations are given according to the prominent factors; and if this be a fact, the importance of the Alaṃkāra has got to be conceded upon. Though later Ālaṃkārikas try to emphasise the subservience of the Alaṃkāras, the poetic figure continues to receive detailed treatment from their hands, and the name of the Śāstra also continues to be Alaṃkāraśāstra, implying the importance of the poetic-figure in a specimen of literary art.

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[9] **Kāvyaṃ grāhyamalaṃkārāt Saundaryamalaṃkāraḥ**
—Kāvyālaṃkārasūtravrtti.

II

Image in Poetic Experience

The science of literary criticism gets a new shape in the hands of Ānadavardhana, the brilliant exponent of the doctrine of Dhavni in the field of Indian poetics. Ānandavardhana declares Dhvani or the suggested-content in general as constituting the essence of poetic art, and says that without this essential element no poetry is worth the name. This Dhvani or the suggested-content, Ānandavardhana maintains, appears in any one of the three aspects : (1) the aspect of a fact (Vastu), (2) the aspect of a figure and (3) the aspect of an emotional-mood (Rasa).[10] Though at the outset the exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani regards the suggested-content in general as the secret of the poetic art, he betrays definitely his leaning towards Rasadhvani, implying thereby the idea that though from the standpoint of theory, the unexpressed in all its aspects constitutes the essence of poetic art, still from the practical point of view, it is the suggested-emotional mood alone which enlivens the poetic-creation. Taking cue from Ānandavardhana, his great commentator Abhinavagupta declares in unequivocal language the Rasadhvani alone as forming the soul of poetic-expression, and as representing the ultimate goal of poetry. Vastudhvani and Alamkāradhvani, he says, are not ends in themselves : they terminate ultimately in Rasadhvani, but since they excel the ordinary expressed-content in point of strikingness, they are described as forming the essence of poetry.[11] The statement of Ānandavardhana, thus, is not to be taken in its face value, since is reflects only theoritic attitude of the learned exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani ; from the practical point of view he concurs with the theory that the poetic expression is ensouled by the Rasa. This is evident from his analysis of the first specimen of poetic art—the Rāmāyaṇa, which he regards as the outward manifestation of the tragic-emotion, generated in the mind of Vālmīki on hearing the pitiful lamentation of the quail, separated from its consort. The death of the mate causes sorrow in the mind of the bird, and its pitiful lamentations cause tragic-emotion in the mind of the seer : this emotion overfloods his mental-plane and as it appears in the external world,—it assumes the shape of the Rāmāyaṇa. This analysis takes note of the distinction between the ordinary grief and the extra-ordinary tragic-emotion, and consequently, is of profound importance from aesthetic point of view.

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[10] Sa ca vastumātramalaṃkārā rasādayaśca ityanekaprabhedapra bhinno'gre darśaiṣyate

—Dhvanyāloka. I.

The concept of Rasa has got a very chequered career in the history of sanskrit poetics. The germ of the doctrine of

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[11] Tena rasadhvanireva vastutaḥ Kāvyasyātmā. Vastvalamkāradhvani tu sarvathā Rasaṃ prati paryavasyete.

—Locana

Rasa is contained in the Atharvaveda, where the soul is described as being delighted by the experience of Rasa,—a statement which shows that the Rasa is to be experienced within one's own being, or in other words there is no existence of Rasa in the outside world.[12] The Ālamkārikas belonging to pre-Dhvani school smuggle the concept into their treatment of the poetic-figure Rasavat, which is said consists in depiction of a feeling common to an animate being. Daṇḍin's concept of the literary excellence of Mādhurya is associated with his idea of Rasa, but this Rasa refers primarily to flavour of poetic appeal, as is evident from the observation of Daṇḍin that the Rasa relating to literary excellence of Mādhurya springs from absence of vulgarity and resides both in expression and content. The poetic figure Rasavat on the other hand consists in delineation of humanly feelings, and has nothing to do with the absence of vulgarity. When Ānandavardhana pays the greatest premium to Rasadhvani, by Rasa he does not refer to appeal or flavour but to the developed form of the mood, that finds its place in the Rasavadalaṃkāra of the ancients,—the mood that reaches the highest point being developed by the accessories,—and when developed absorves the total consciousness of the appreciator.

The process of comprehension of Rasa itself forms the subject-matter of an animated discussion, as is evident from numerous expositions on the dictum of Bharata, explaining the concept of Rasa. Of all discussions on the exact process of comprehension, the Rasasūtra of Bharata forms the starting point. It runs as vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogātrasaniṣpattiḥ, which means that Rasa is relished through association with the Vibhāva, the Anubhāva, and the Vyabhicāribhāva, etc. The terms Vibhaba etc. are technical terms, and consequently need elaborations. The cause of the permanent feeling, like the lady and the moon-light,—the first

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12. Akāmo dhīro amṛtaḥ svaṃbhū rasena tṛpto na kutaścanonaḥ.
—Atharvaveda 10.8.44.

of which represents the opposite party to love and the second goes to excite the feeling already generated,—when introduced in Poetry gets the designation of the Vibhāva, because it brings the Rasa to a relishable state. The Vibhāva thus is nothing other than the Kāraṇa, but the peculiar nomenclature is given to it in order to show that it is extra-ordinary in character, and that ordinary cause-and-effect theory is not applicable in the case of the Vibhāva and the Rasa. The Anubhāva similarly is that which follows the Bhāva or the feeling: this is the direct result of feeling generated,—the effects through which the mood manifests itself. Just as the cause of the permanent feeling, when represented in Poetry is transformed into Vibhāva, similarly the effect of this feeling when introduced in Poetry is converted into the supernormal Anubhāva, which is distinct from the ordinary effect. While the Vibhāva and the Anubhāva stand for the external factors necessary for aesthetic realisation the Sthāyibhāva and the Vyabhicāribhāva represent the internal feelings necessary for bringing the Rasa to a relishable state. The term Sthāyibhāva, as the name suggests, refers to the permanent mood, which resides in the form of latent impression in the minds of all persons, and is incapable of being eradicated from the mental plane. The Sthāyibhāva thus is the basic human feeling, which exists in all persons of all countries and ages. When the excitent factors appear, these feelings are evoked, and when these are withdrawn, they again go back to their dormant states. There is no person who does not experience love,—none is inexperienced to grief, none to anger,—none to hatred,—none to heroism, and so on. While the Sthāyibhāva is a permanent disposition residing in the form of a latent impression in the mind, the Vyabhicāribhāva is a transient mood, appearing in and disappearing from the mind off and on. Neither the transient feeling appears necessarily in all persons nor does it remain in one person for all time to come. As a matter of fact there are persons who are totally inexperienced to bashfulness, that does not reside in the form of an impression permanently in the mind. As the transient feelings are necessary to bring into full relief the permanent mood, so Bharata mentions the Vyabhicāribhāva as one of the requisite factors essential to aesthetic realisation. In a brilliant manner Abhinavagupta brings out the relation existing between the Sthāyibhāva and the Vyabhicāribhāva. He describes the Sthāyibhāva as a colourful string to which stones of different colours in the shape of different Vyabhicāribhāvas are kept tied : the colour of the string is reflected on the transparent stones, which in their term tinges the thread by their colour ; similarly the Sthāyī augment the Vyabhicārī, which in its term extends nourishment to the Sthāyī. By comparing the Sthāyī to the main string, Bharata wants to bring home the point that the Vyabhicārī depends entirely on the Sthāyibhāva for its existence, and the former came and go in the wake of the latter only. The Vyabhicārī or the transient feeling has no independent existence of its own ; but nevertheless it leads to nourishment of the Sthāyī and enables the Rasa to come to a relishable state. As regards the actual process of comprehension of Rasa, Bharata is practically silent. Following the old method of explaining with the help of parallelisms he says that just as additional flavour is imparted to rise by a plate of vegetables, similarly additional relish is imparted to the permanent feeling by a combination of the Vibhāva, the Anubhāva, and the Vyabhicāribhāva. This statement is extremely cryptic, but it recognises the part played by the Vibhāva, the Anubhāva and the Vyabhicāribhāva in attainment of aesthetic experience ; and on a proper analysis of this part depends the assessment of contribution of the poetic-image to the attainment of emotive experience.

Later commentators expend their energy in furnishing a proper explanation to this dictum, and in course of putting forward their own explanations they set forth their theories on aesthetic realisation. The first critic to comment on the aphorism is Bhaṭṭalollaṭa, who considers the original personage as constituting the locus of Rasa. Rasa belonging to the original personage is superimposed on the actor, who is taken as identical with the original personage, and there after is known by the spectator through the process of perception. With great thoroughness Bhaṭṭalollaṭa finds out the relation between the Vibhāvas and the like on the one hand, and Rasa on the other. The Vibhāva, he says generates the Rasa ; the Anubhāva expresses it and the Vyabhicāribhāva leads to its nourishment. The idea that the basic mood attains nourishment and is conducted to a relishable state as it comes into contact with the Vibhāvas and the like is known to Daṇḍin as well, who thus is affiliated to the school of Bhaṭṭahollaṭa.[13] The belief that the original personage forms the locus of Rasa finds expression in the observations of Śaṅkuka as well, who tries to explain the dictum from the standpoint of the Nyāya system of philosophy. Like Bhaṭṭalollaṭa, Śaṅkuka also thinks that Rasa belonging to original personage is superimposed on the actor, who is regarded as one with the chief character ; but while Bhaṭṭalollaṭa is of opinion that the knowledge, of the spectators is an erroneous one, Śaṅkuka maintains that it is a new type of cognition, being different from the ordinary four-types of notion—the right, the wrong, the doubtful, and the similar. This knowledge, Śaṅkuka continues, is comparable to the knowledge, which one has of horse in relation to the picture of the horse. The picture of the horse is neither taken as the horse itself, nor as a non-horse ; neither is the horse comprehended as similar to the picture of the horse, nor is the mind of the spectator haunted by a doubt as to the exact nature of the picture. In a similar manner, the actor is neither regarded as the original personage himself, nor as one different from the original character, nor as resembling the original character ; no doubt as to the exact nature of the original character further is generated in the mind of the spectator. Analysing the psychology of the refined-spectator, Śaṅkuka arrives at this new type of cognition, which he names as Citraturaganyāyānusāriṇīpratītiḥ. There is another vital point on which the doctrine of Śaṅkuka differs from that of Bhaṭṭalollaṭa : according to Bhaṭṭalollaṭa such knowledge of the spectator as, "this Rāma is possessed of love in separation with reference to Sītā" or "this Duṣmanta is possessed of love with reference to Śakuntalā" is perceptive in character : according to Śaṅkuka however this knowledge is inferential in nature. In his eagerness to define his position Śaṅkuka refers to that well-known maxim which states that, in case of conflict between perception and inference, the latter prevails over the former in those cases where the content of knowledge are different. As the content of perception in the present case is the actor presented before the eyes of the spectator and the content of inference is the feeling, so Śaṅkuka argues, the knowledge derived by the spectators is bound to be inferential in nature.

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[13] Prāk prītirdarśitā seyaṃ ratiḥ Śṛṅgāratāṃ gatā /
Rūpabāhulyayogena tadidaṃ rasavadvacaḥ // —Kāvyādarśaḥ II 281

Both Bhaṭṭalollaṭa and Śaṅkuka maintain that Rasa belonging to the original personage is known by the spectator either through perception or through inference, and this knowledge leads to disinterested bliss. It is not clear as to how the knowledge of feeling belonging to another produces supermundane delight in the mind of the appreciator. Bhaṭṭalollaṭa and Śaṅkuka are silent on this point and this inherent weakness in the two theories lead to their rejection at the hands of later rhetoricians. Finding fault with these two doctrines, Bhaṭṭanāyaka asserts that Rasa is to be relished within ones own being, and it is this realisation of Rasa within ones ownself that is in a position to cause transcendental delight.[14] Consequently it is an imperative necessity to relish Rasa as belonging to us ; but a difficulty in attainment of this experience is posed by the absence of the Vibhāvas and the like. Rasa, it is reported, is relished through combination of the Vibhāva, the Anubhāva and the Vyabhicāribhāva which naturally play very prominent role in the attainment of aesthetic experience. Śakuntalā may be Vibhāva to the feeling of love generated in Duṣmanta, but she cannot be regarded as the cause of love excited in the spectator. To obviate this difficulty Bhaṭṭalollaṭa extends recognition to the novel function of Bhāvakatva, which is supposed to lead to generalisation. The function of Bhāvakatva puts an end to the feeling that Śakuntalā is not fit to be enjoyed by the ordinary spectator, and thereafter presents her to us in her universal and impersonal capacity. Śakuntalā is a particular lady standing in a particular relationship to a particular king, ruling over a particular territory at a particular period. The function Bhāvakatva divests Śakuntalā of all her particularities and introduces her as a lovable lady in the threshold of her youth. She is impersonalised, so to say, as a result of which she is cognised in her abstract aspect by the refined-reader. What holds good of the Vibhāva holds good of the Sthāyī and the Vyabhicārī as well, since neither the basic mood nor the transient feeling is comprehended in its personal aspect, but rather in its impersonal capacity, without any reference to the lover or the beloved. The process of generalisation or Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa has another aspect also ; in this aspect it conducts the refined-spectator to a higher-plane of consciousness, reaching which he thinks himself as one with the instructed public,—as one sharing the feelings of all. Behind is left by him the oridinary dry world, where the mind is haunted by the thought of the individual and the particular. Bhaṭṭanāyaka thus considers Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa as an essential stage in aesthetic realisation ; and according to him, not only the character, the basic mood and the transient feelings are impersonalised ; but the reader also is universalised. This Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa, he contends, is caused through the function of Bhāvakatva, which operates in the realm of literary art alone. To this Bhāvakatva a helping hand is extended by the literary excellence and the poetic-figure in a specimen of poetic art, and the four-types of acting and other arrangements in a specimen of dramatic art. Beyond this Bhaṭṭanāyaka does not say anything, but the way in which he finds out the relation between imagery and emotive experience is unique and deserves elaboration. The particular name given to Śakuntalā is supposed to paint her out as a particular lady, standing in different types of relationship to different persons. The feeling that Śakuntalā is not a particular lady, but rather a type is unlikely to be experienced by a normal man: the very genesis of this feeling shows that the experiencer has lost his normalcy and has been thrown off his balance. Bhaṭṭanāyaka by recognising the process of generalisation takes it for granted that the experiencer is thrown off his balance: it is also said that he himself is universalised or in other words he becomes a victim to a feeling that he is a participant in the feast of bliss with others. When it is said that imagery helps this feeling to dawn in the mind of the experiencer, it is recognised that the Alaṅkāras are endowed with powers to throw a normal man off his balance; and on correct determination of this power depends the assessment of the contribution of the poetic-figure in literary art.

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[14] Bhaṭṭanāyakastu-Tāṭasthyena rasapratītau anāsvādyatvam
Ātmagatatvena tu pratyayo durghaṭaḥ.
—Rasagaṅgādhara.

This capacity of the poetic-figure receives recognition from Abhinavagupta as well, who concurs with Bhaṭṭanāyaka in regarding Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa or generalisation as an essential step in attainment of emotive experience. Abhinavagupta is of opinion that at the time of appreciation of Poetry, the characters, the situations, the moods—all these are universalised, and the appreciator is also conducted to a higher-plane of consciousness, reaching which he finds out his unity with all the experiencers, as a result of which he experiences Poetry not in his personal capacity, but rather as a representative of the instructed public. Abhinavagupta, the ardent advocate of Vyañjanā thinks that the permanent moods reside in the form of latent impression in the minds of all experiencers; and as Poetry is experienced, these impressions are called into play and appear in the form of felt feelings. As this happens the mind of the experiencer gets concentrated on the awakened feelings, as a result of which it becomes steady and free from oscillations. When this steadiness occurs to the mind, bliss is experienced naturally, because while all miseries spring from oscillation of the mind, all happiness ensue from its steadiness. Following in the foot steps of his learned predecessor Bhaṭṭanāyaka, Abhinavagupta also recognises the part played by generalisation and attainment of steadiness by the mind,—both of which are necessary for aesthetic realisation, but while Bhaṭṭanāyaka tries to explain the two processes with the help of the functions of Bhāvakatva and Bhojakatva, Abhinavagupta attempts to explain all these with the help of the single function- of Vyañjanā, which according to Dhvani theorist is endowed with tremendous power.

As poetry is appreciated and the mind of the connoisseur becomes concentrated on the awakened feeling, that constitutes the link between all the connoisseurs, the veil of ignorance that covers the bliss, associated with his consciousness is dispelled, as a result of which he experiences bliss, and bliss alone. Rasa therefore refers to a state of unmixed joy, and as Adhinavagupta maintains, this joy forms a part and parcel of our own being. The soul is conceived of by the Vedāntin as one comprised of existence, consciousness and bliss : this implies that bliss is associated forever with our own being. In the ordinary world, however, this is not relished, because the covering of ignorance stands in the way of the relisher experiencing the relished. At the time of appreciation of poetry, however, the gloom of ignorance is wiped away by the supernormal poetic function of Suggestion, and as this is done, bliss associated with our own being manifests itself in its full splendour in normal course.. In this attempt to give an exposition of the doctrine of Abhinavagupta, Jagannātha puts forward a fine parallelism. So long as Jagannātha says, the lamp remains covered by a covering and neither it reveals its ownself, nor does it reveal others :

when this covering is removed, however, the lamp manifests itself in its glory, and revelation of things also situated near the lamp takes place. In a similar manner so long as the curtain of ignorance covers the bliss element of our pure consciousness, sorrow or hatred or indignation is experienced : but when Vyañjanā puts an end to this curtain the bliss element reveals itself, along with the moods that are capable of being comprehended by pure consciousness alone, independent of the external sense-organs.[15] Abhinavagupta thus regards Rasa as manifestation of bliss constituting a part and parcel of our own being ; and this explains the non-experience of the slightest sting of pain from appreciation of those creations, as well, that do depict the unpleasant. In order to explain this manifestation of bliss, Bhaṭṭanāyaka feels the necessity of postulating the hitherto unrecognised function of Bhojakatva, but Abhinavagupta believing in the infinite powers of the poetic function of Suggestion does not recognise the necessity of accepting this function, since, as he says, the extranormal poetic function that converts the most deformed into the most beautiful is quite competent to do away with the covering of ignorance, and to set the stage ready for attaining experience of poetic relish.

Agreeing with Bhaṭṭanāyaka, Abhinavagupta accepts Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa as an essential step necessary for attainment of aesthetic experience, and explains this process as appearing in two aspects. By Sādharaṇīkaraṇa, first of all he says, is meant the understanding of the Vidhāvas and the like in their universal and impersonal aspects. When Poetry is appreciated, the characters and the environments presented are not cognised by the experiencer in their strictly limited capacities but rather in their impersonal aspects, free from limitations imposed by place and time. Not only the characters and the situations are understood in their universalised forms, but the mood itself is comprehended in its impersonal aspect, that is to say without any reference to the actual nature of the parties to different feelings. Abhinavagupta, as has been pointed out before is of opinion that the comprehension of the permanent mood awakens the corresponding mood lying in the form of a latent impression in the mind of the experiencer; and as this mood is cognised by him, this is also universalised in this respect that the appreciator does not experience the mood as confines strictly to himself.

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[15] Vyaktiśca bhagnāvaraṇā cit. Yathā hi
Śaravādinā pihito dipastannivṛttau
Sannihitān padārthān prakaśayati, svayaṃ
Ca prakāśate, evam ātmacaitanyaṃ
Vibhāvādisamvalitān ratyādīn,
antaḥkaraṇadharmāṇām sākṣibhāsyatvābhyupagateḥ.
Rasagaṅgādhar, I

This naturally leads us to the second phase of the process of Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa,—the phase in which the subject of experience also is universalised. The first phase of Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa, refers to universalisation of the object of experience, and through this the object is conducted to a supernormal state. And the second phase of this process refers to universalisation of the subject of experience, and through it the experiencer is conducted to a higher-plane of consciousness, reaching which he finds out his unity with all experiencers, as a result of which Rasa is experienced by him not in his individual capacity, but rather in the representative one. As Rasa is experienced, the sense of narrow individuality of the refined-reader or the spectator as the case might be is rendered docile, and the common flow of thoughts concerning his petty joy and sorrow, gain and loss, hope and despair is suspended for the time being. As a result of this his small sense of ego is put to sleep; but it is wrong to think that the ego of the experiencer is completely wiped away, because if his personality is lost completely, it no longer remains possible for him to experience the relish of Poetry. As a matter of fact the very process of experience depends for its operation on the subject-object relation, and unless this relation becomes complete, the process of experience does not take place. For attainment of experience, the subject is as much necessary as the object itself. Consequently it follows that the personality of the experiencer does not lose itself completely : what is lost is the narrow personality of the individual appreciator. At the time of experiencing Poetry, the appreciator forgets his own narrow-self, and his ego-boundaries are expanded so to say. As a result of this he experiences his oneness with all the connoisseurs of poetic art and undergoes a state, that is referred to as Hṛdayasaṃvāda by Abhinavagupta.[16] The appreciator starts to experience the feelings in his representative capacity, as the expansion of his ego-boundaries takes place. It is for this reason Bhoja, the great exponent of Śṛṅgāra declares the Śṛṅgāra as the basic emotional mood, and explains it as the capacity inherent in the mind of the appreciator to experience Rasa. This capacity is nothing other than ego, without which no experience is likely to take place. The appreciator is prompted to experience Poetry because he likes to derive bliss and thereby to tender solace to his self, tormented by the miseries of the empirical world. All action springs from self-love, and the action of experiencing Poetry also is no exception to this general rule : it springs from self-love as well ; but this self is not the narrow-self of the ordinary world : it is an expanded-self, conducted to a higher-plane of consciousness. Realisation of Rasa, therefore, is the blissful experience of the transformed-object by the expanded-self : and it is for this reason that the ancient rhetoricians refer to this state as the bonded-liberated state,—as the Samyukta-Viyuktadaśā. At the time of experiencing Rasa, the mind of the experiencer gets definitely detached from

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16. Sāmājikadhiyi samyakyogaṃ sambandham aikāgrayaṃ Vā āsvāditavadbhiralaukikanirvighnasaṃvedanātmakacarvaṇāgocaratāṃ nīto'rthaścarvyamānataikasāro na tu siddhasvabhāvaḥ tātkālikaḥ eva, na tu carvaṇātiriktakālā Valambī, sthāyivilakṣaṇa eva rasaḥ.
—Abhinavabhāratī, p. 284.

the ordinary circumstances, but this detachment is not the same as that which happens in case of the realisation of the Absolute Reality. The concentration is there, but is on a multiplicity of objects, like the characters, the situation and the like. This makes up for the incompleteness of this concentration; and it is possibly because of this that Viśvanātha describes Rasāsvāda as a state akin to Brahmāsvāda, and not exactly identical with it. In experience of the Absolute Reality, the personality of the experiencer is completely lost, so to say, and he realises his oneness with the supreme spirit: in experience of the Rasa however, the individuality of the comprehender is not totally wiped away, since he is raised to a higher-plane of consciousness, reaching which he realises his oneness with humanity at large; in experience of Absolute Reality, the mind gets concentrated on one reality alone; in experience of Rasa however, there is concentration on plurality of things; in the Brahmāsvāda the detachment from the empirical world is complete: in Rasāsvāda, this detachment is incomplete in the sense that, Rasa is experienced so long as the Vibhāvas and the like exist, and the moment they are withdrawn, the experience of Rasa ceases to exist, and that the ego of the experiencer continues to retain itself in its expanded form.

III

Image in Expansion of Ego-boundaries.

The problem of expansion of one's ego-boundaries leads us to a very important question, namely the determination of exact nature of aesthetic experience. The Ālaṃkārikas usually explain the concept of Rasa in accordance with tenets of the Vedānta system of philosophy, and maintain that as the veil of ignorance is removed by the transcendental function of Suggestion in the mental-plane of the comprehender, bliss associated with his being, reveals itself in its full glory, as a result of which he experiences unmixed joy and joy alone. This attempt to explain the concept of Rasa naturally takes for granted the process of complete loss of one's personality, since so long as one's individuality persists, the bliss associated with his own being cannot manifest itself in its undimmed glory. The experience of the connoisseur does not go to prove the correctness of this process, because as we witness to a theatrical performance, our individualities are not lost completely, and actually there appear moments, when we remain conscious of the relation of the experiencer and the experienced as existing between our own-selves and the objects presented on board. In the experience of Rasa, the experiencer and the experienced both exist and in this respect this state of mind of the experiencer is capable of being described as the state that happens of a Yogin at the time of Saṃprajñātasamādhi, in which the distinction between the subject and the object of experience is retained. In Rasāsvāda, the object and the subject however are transformed to a considerable extent, since the object does not come from the ordinary world of experience, but from the realm of poetry, and are universalised, so to say, through the powers of the transcendental poetic function : the subject of this experience also is not the ordinary subject, bounded by limitations of space and time, but the expanded one, who realises his unity with humanity at large. It is because of this that the connoisseur easily experiences the feeling generated in the original characters and enjoys the blissful experience, relished by the poet at the time of creation. The observation of Bhojarāja throws light on this point, and he is the first Ālaṃkārika to explain the concept of Rasa in a different way, making it more adoptable to our ordinary experience. Bhojarāja describes the Śṛṅgāra as the basic emotional mood, and he explains this term as a quality of the ego that makes the experience of the Rasa possible, in as much as, without its aesthetic experience does not take place.[17] The attainment of aesthetic experience has for its initial stage, the state represented by Ūrjasvī were the ego of experiencer makes itself felt prominently in order to have experience of the Rasa : in the second stage it reaches the state represented by Rasavat, where the different emotional moods are experienced in their varied richness ; and ultimately it reaches the state represented by Preyas, and culminates in self-love. The attainment of aesthetic experience therefore, has for its Parākoṭi (initial stage) the awakening of ego or ego-consciousness, and for its Uttarākoṭi (culminating stages) self-love : Rasasvāda thus is the experience of the self by the expanded-ego. An analysis of our own experience goes to establish the veracity of this statement.[18] As a theatrical performance is witnessed, the experiencer derives joy, and this attainment of unmixed bliss prompts him to take the trouble of obtaining a spectator to the incident presented on the board. Complete loss of his own personality is not in a position to account for attainment on bliss by him ; nor is it in a position to explain the noncomprehension of Rasa by the Yogin, completely detached from the ordinary world. At the time of experience of Rasa therefore, the personality of the perceiver retains itself ; and what happens is that it is raised to an expanded and higher state : and as this expanded-ego experiences the generalised objects, experience of bliss naturally takes place. To Bhojarāja therefore posterity is heavily indebted for giving an analysis of Rasa in accordance with the experience of the ordinary connoisseur.

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[17] Ātmasthitaṃ guṇaviśeṣamahaṃkṛtasya
Śṛṅgāramāhuriha jīvitamātmanayoneḥ /
Tasyātmaśaktirasanīyatayā Rasatvaṃ
Yuktasya yena, rasiko, yamiti pravādaḥ // —Śṛṅgāraprakāśa.

[18] Tatra 'Ūrjasvi Rūḍhāhaṃkāram' ityanena ātmaviśeṣaniṣṭhasya……… ahaṃkāraviśeṣasya upasamgrahāt ahaṃkārābhi māna—śṛṅgārā paranāmno rasasya……parāṃ koṭim upavarṇayati.

Rasavadrasapeśalam ityanena……anekadhā āvirbhavataḥ abhivardhamānasya paraprakarṣagāminaḥ śṛṅgārasaya madhyamāvasthāṃ sūcayati.

Preyaḥ priyatarākhyānam ityanena ahaṃkārasya uttarām koṭim upalakṣayayati. Sarveṣāmapi hi ratyādiprakarṣāṇāṃ ratipriyo raṇapriyaḥ paribhāsapriyaḥ amarṣapriya iti premnyeva paryavasānaṃ bhavati.
—Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharaṇa. p. 613

This novel analysis of Rasa poses before us the important problem of determing the quantum of contribution of the image in the experience of Rasa. The Ālaṃkārikas in their attempts to enunciate a definition of the Alaṃkāra, maintain that the Alaṃkāra helps the Rasa : beyond this they say nothing, and the critic is constrained to plunge into a discussion on the exact role of the image in poetry. The Alaṃkāra effects connection between two disconnected things, and it is because of this that the Alaṃkāras are analysable into different types of relation. The poetic figure Upamā thus is based on the relation of similarly, that of Rūpaka on the relation of identity, that of Virodha on the relation of contradiction, that of Arthāntaranyāsa on the relation existing between the corroborator and the corroborated and so on. The Alaṃkāra as a general rule tries to effect integration of images by effecting union between the disconnected, and thereby presenting a complete and unified picture of the theme itself. When Vāmana describes the poetic-figures as the transformation of the same Simile, and Appayadīkṣita regards the Simile as the chief actress trying to captivate the minds of the connoisseurs by its mainfold transformations, they give expressions to this profound truth that the purpose served by the Simile is served by all the poetic figures, and this purpose is nothing other than integration of images. When Kālidāsa is praised for his skill in employment of the poetic figure of Upamā, what is really commended is his dexterity in effecting integration of images. The image employed in a poetic art consequently, tries to unify disconnected things and ideas, and thereby places the object of description in its greater and universal perspective. The piece of cloud hovering in the firmament is a detached being, not connected in any way with the beings of the earthly region : but when Kālidāsa describes it as Vaprakrīḍāpariṇatagajaprekṣaṇīyaṃ dadarśa, or in other words, when he compares it to a mighty tusker dealing its side-blows on the ramparts of a mountain, he effects connection between the lordly elephant, and emblem of royalty in the earthly region and the hovering piece of cloud, moving majestically in the firmament. The cloud is not represented in its small nature as it is, but rather as one having connection with the emblem of royalty; and thereby with the prosperous earthly region itself. In a similar manner when Vālmīki describes the earth emiting vapour, being touched by the first rain drops to be as enchanting as Sītā shedding tears, the object of description itself becomes greater in magnitude, since the earth is not cognised as it is, but as related to the sorrowing Sītā, bitterly lamenting separation from her-consort.[19] The grief experienced by Sītā is transmuted thereby to the earth, which consequently finds out its connection with the feelings of human mind. The image drawn by Vālmīki therefore transforms the ordinary earth in which we move and have our being into an extraordinary one, in which it shares the feelings of the sorrowing humanity at large: in this way, the object is raised to an elevated status: it no longer remains the ordinary object of the empirical plane. When Vyāsa similarly compares the rising moon to the smile ornamenting the face of the newly-wed bride, the moon becomes completely different from the moon, whose rays we are accustomed to enjoy in the ordinary world: it gets associated with the joy experienced by the newly-wed bride,—the combination of loveliness and bashfulness.[20] In this way Vyāsa gives a transformed nature to the moon, and instead of presenting the moon as it is, it presents the moon as it appears to him to be,—as one sharing the feelings of the coy-bride, and leading to experience of the same pleasant feelings in the minds of the perceivers, as are likely to be caused by the sight of the bashful and charming girl. The images of Vyāsa, Vālmīki and Kālidāsa thus present the respective objects in their deeper and greater magnitudes,—in their universal aspects, and thereby render them fit for being experienced by the universalised self of the experiencer. It is possibly because of this that Abhinavagupta, the brilliant expounder of Ānandavardhana regards the Alaṃkāra as a principal aid to the process of Sādhīrannīkaraṇa, that is regarded as an essential step in aesthetic realisation. The Alaṃkāra converts the objects of experience into a universal one,—presents it in its bigger perspective as related to the universe at large, and thereby gives a transformation to it in such a way that it becomes a proper content of experience, obtainable by the expanded-ago.

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[19] Eṣā gharmapariklisṭā navavāripariplutā/
Siteva Śokasantaptā mahī bāṣpaṃ Vimuñcati//
—Rāmāyaṇa (Kiṣkindhyā) Canto 28.7

[20] Haravṛṣottamagātrasamadyutiḥ
Smaraśārasanapūrnasamaprabhaḥ/
Navavadhūsmitacārumanoharaḥ
Pravisṛtaḥ Kumudākarabāndhavaḥ//
—Mahātbhārata, Droṇavadhaparva 184.
Verse 47.

The image in Poetry has its impact on the subject of experience also. When Bhaṭṭanāyaka describes the poetic—figure as extending help to the function of Bhāvakatva, that is supposed to lead to generalisation in his scheme and Abhinavagupta maintains that the process of universalisation is effected automatically in the mind of the comprehender through the power of the function of Suggestion, that is aided to a considerable extent by the literary embellishment, they certainly take note of the impact produced by the poetical image on both the subject and object of the experience. The poetical image is intended to astound by effecting connection between irreconcilable as also by presenting the poetic truth, which is different from the ordinary truth of the empirical plane. Science also presents truth : but the truth of science conforms to our ordinary experiences, and in this sense this is capable of being described as factual truth. The poetic truth is the truth of probability : this is in a position to happen, and it actually occurs, it conducts the experiencers' to the gate way of the good through shady avenue of the beautiful. And this happens because imagination and feeling are the predominent elements in Poetry ; while the world with which the science deals is what is commonly called the world of fact, the world with which Poetry deals is life interpreted through imagination and feeling. To the ordinary experiencer a river is always a flowing mass of water : to one interpreting life through imagination and feelings however, a river is a lady out in the streets to meet her lover—exhibiting her navel by the whirlpoor and making sound by her waist-chain represented by the chirping row of birds. This truth is discovered by the poet, when his mind becomes surcharged with emotion and his poetic intuition finds out suitable expression to catch the emotive experience obtained by him ; and the reader also receives the truth as such, because the blissful experience of the poet is transplanted in him : he does not realise the wide-gap existing between the poetic-truth and the factual-truth, persisting in the present case. To state clearly the refined-connoisseur does not find out any discord in the pathetic falacy of Kālidāsa, when he says :

Vīcikṣobhastanitavihaśreṇikāñcīgunāyāḥ
Saṃsarpanthyāḥ skhalitasubhagaṃ darśitābarttanābheḥ/
Nirvindhyāyāḥ pathi bhava rasābhyantaraḥ sannipatya
Strīṇāmādyaṃ praṇayavacanaṃ vibhramo hi priyeṣu//

Poetical image thus is intended to present the poetical truth, and to induce the experiencers to accept it as it is. In order to accept it as it is, it becomes necessary for him to give up his normalcy to certain extent, because a man in a moral state of mind cannot experience the river as an estranged lover out in the streets to meet her loving consort. This is capable of being accepted by him only when he is conducted to supernormal plane to higher level, reaching which he comes in a position to share the feelings of humanity in general and the poet in particular. Transplantation of the poet's exprience becomes possible only in a mind, which has reached an extra-normal level, free from the common thoughts concerning ordinary joy and sorrow, petty hope and despair. And the poetic image causes to check this flow of ordinary thoughts, and thereby to transform the subject of experience to an universalised comprehender.

But before transforming the experiencer to a universalised state so that he can share easily feelings of the poet and realise his oneness with humanity at large, the image gives a startling jolt to his mental apparatus and completely throws him off his balance. A poet is thrown off his feet by the exuberance of emotion, and a comprehender is thrown off his balance by the poetical image, which causes a profound sense of astonishment in him. As he sees even the most remotest thing in the world being brought into relation by the astounding poetic image, his mind gets a startling jolt, and he forgets for the time being his narrow individuality, imposed by limitations of time and space. When Kālidāsa therefore describes the image of the cloud, reflected on the crystal clear waters of Ganges as resembling the confluence of the Ganges and Jamunā and presents the cloud hanging low on the surface of the earth as a mighty celestial-elephant resting on the skies with his under part alone, the comprehender is amazed, so to say, to experince this peculiar relation being established between two irreconcilables; and as his mind becomes filled up with wonder, he throws off his individual ego,—his small personality, circumscribed by time, place and circumstance.[21] It is not without justification therefore that Nārāyaṇa, the ancestor of Viśvanātha describes the marvellous as the basic emotional mood, implying thereby that the experience of the marvellous makes itself felt in the experience of all other emotional moods, and that without perception of wonder there can be no appreciation of poetry. In a similar manner when Kālidāsa gives a natural description of the advent of spring and draws one of the most beautiful word-paintings by saying : the sun being bent on going to the northern quarter, the south discharges air like a sign of sorrow : the Aśoka produces flower with leaves commencing from the trunk itself : the excessively red Palāśa flowers appear like wounds from nails : the beauty of the spring puts forth the Tilaka flowers as the mark of beauty, the row of black-bees as the black paint, and adorns by the orient sun the young mango-blossom representing her lip—the experiencer is astounded to see the charming spectacle of the approach of the vernal season, presented in a novel way : his sense of personality is lost, and the ego-boundaries expand, making it possible for him to experience the feelings of the humanity at large.[22] The poetical image by presenting the charmingness and the noble character of the object of description infuses in him a urge to enjoy the beautiful,—an instinct which is always in the human heart. When this instinct, lying dormant in the ordinary state is aroused, the experiencer finds it easy for him to shake off the bondage imposed by his narrow individulity, because beauty is incapable of being enjoyed by the small mind, pre-occupied by mundane thoughts ; and once enjoyed it produces a ennobling effect,—conducting the experiencer to a higher level. The image in Poetry thus produces a twofold effect : on the one hand it prevents the object of experience in a universalised state, and on the other hand enables the ego-boundary of the generalised comprehender to expand, making it possible for him thereby to attain emotive-experience in representative capacity. And the real enjoyment of Poetry consists in experience of the universalised object by the expanded-subject : by effecting this universalisation and expansion the poetical image plays a very prominent role in poetry. As a matter of fact there can be no Poetry without poetical image.

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[21] Tasyāḥ pātuṃ suragaja iva vyomni paścārdhalambi
Tvañcedacchasphaṭikaviśadaṃ tarkayestiryagambhaḥ/
Saṃsarpantyā sapadi bhavataḥ srotasi cchāyayāsau
Syādasthānopagatayamunāsaṅgamevābhirāmā//
—Meghadūta, 53

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[22] Kuberaguptāṃ diśamuṣṇarasmau
Gantuṃ pravṛtte samayaṃ vilaṅghya/
Digdakṣiṇā gandhavahaṃ mukhena
Vyalīkaniśvāsamivotsasarja//
Lagnadvirephā ñjanabhakticitram
Mukhe madhuśrīstilakaṃ prakāśya/
Rāgeṇa balāruṇakomalena
Cūtapravāloṣṭhamalaṃcakāra//
—Kumārsambhava, III. 25, 30

CHAPTER—II

The Principle of using the image

Vālmīki & Ānandavardhana : Practice & Theory

Sanskrit Poetics conceives of the poet as one in whom the capacity to realise the truth and the power to give a graphic description of the truth realised in suitable language combine : a poet, therefore, is a seer of truth and a master of expression. This conception of Sanskrit Poetics is prompted possibly by the consideration of giving a befitting reply to the critics of poetry who tender advice to eschew the study of poetry on the ground that it leads the readers to the dreamland of fancy and thus renders them unable to face the grim realities of the world. In order to controvert this contention of the opponent it is pointed out that a poet does not take his stand on falsehood : he is as much a seer of truth as the philosopher or the scientist. But the mere capacity of realising the truth does not make up a poet : it is necessary to have the power of bringing into expression the realised truth in a charming manner. Bhaṭṭatauta perfectly observes : though in the ordinary language a poet is regarded as the seer of truth, in the terminology of the Śāstras a poet is one in whom the capacity to discover the truth and the power to express the truth through an appropriate image combine ; though from time immemorial the power to discover the truth is there, still poetry is brought into being only when the first seer Vālmīki attempts to incorporate the suitable images in order to bring the realised reality into expression.[1] This statement of Bhaṭṭatauta is surcharged with profound truth, since it brings into light the importance of the image, which is so essential in formation of poetic texture.

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[1] Sa tattvadarśanādeva śāstreṣu prathitaḥ kaviḥ/
Darśanāt varṇanāccātha rūḍhā loke kaviśrutiḥ/
Tathāhi darśane sacchve nitye' pyadikaver muneḥ
Noditā kavitā yavāt jātā loke na varṇanā/
—Bhaṭṭatauta, Cited by Hemacandra

This leads us naturally to an analysis of the image introduced by Vālmīki in the first specimen of poetic-art—the Rāmāyaṇa. The first seer makes the feeling his guiding principle and applies naturalism or hyperbolic statement in accordance with the predominant feeling. As Rāma slays Vāli and places Sugrīva on the throne he retires on the mountain Mālyavat. Suddenly the rainy season approaches, covering the skies with glossy twany clouds, that appear as wounds on the surface of the firmament. The earth being touched by first rain drops emits vapour like Sītā shedding tears afflicted with grief: the lightning reclining on the dark cloud shines like poor Sītā struggling in embrace of Rāvaṇa, the lord of the demons: the streak of lightning having colours of gold gives the firmament a new look: as the clouds resemble, the sky seems to give expression to its deep feeling of pain. As the rainy season approaches Rāma separated from his loving wife experiences profound sorrow, and gifted with a poetic intuition Vālmīki transmutes the sorrow experienced by Rāma to the outer world: consequently the earth appears as shedding tears, the firmament appears as giving expression to its great pain and lightning appears as Sītā struggling in the hold of Rāvaṇa.[2] Vālmīki knows the art of presenting nature after seeing it through the eyes of his characters, and as the beauty of the rains is cognised through the eyes' of sorrowing Rāma, the sting of pain belonging to the things associated with it is naturally experienced. Vālmīki realises the necessity of taking recourse to the poetic device of hyperbole in drawing the image of the rains, because the device is suitable for giving expression to the feeling experienced by Rāma. But soon Rāma realises the utility of experiencing the beauty of nature in order to give solace to his sorrowing heart; and as this realisation dawns in Rāma, the poetic device of Vālmiki also changes: the hyperbole yields place to poetic naturalism. And adopting the device of poetic naturalism which goes by the name Svabhāvokti, Vālmīki proceeds to draw the image of the rains: as drops of rain come down on earth, the dust settles down; the earth becomes covered by fresh grass: the rivers rush towards the ocean: the dancing peacocks ornament the outskirts of the forests: Kadambas blossom, the OX feels urge for union with its mate: the elephants experience joy: the cows move freely in the forest: the lions enjoy repose: the water-ladened clouds get mixed up with their counterparts and as the storm rages with its terrific sound accompanied by thunder-shower, the rivers burstforth their banks and submerge areas adjoining them.[3] This is a faithtul description of the new look which nature gets in the rains; and ás Vālmīki feels that this is in a position to give expression to the comfort experienced by the erst-while sorrowing heart of Rāma, he incorporates poetic naturalism in lieu of the hyperbole introduced earlier. The analysis shows that Vālmīki makes the feeling the final adjudicator of poetic image, and adopts the device of metaphor or naturalism as the case may be, keeping an eye on the delineation of the principal sentiment.

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[2] Kaśabhiriva haimībhirvidhyudbhirabhitāritam /
Antaḥstanitanirghoṣaṃ savedanamivāmbaram //
Nīlameghāśritā vidyut sphurantī pratibhāti me /
Sphurantī rāvaṇasyāṅke Vaidehīva tapasvinī //
—Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa
28, 11-12

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[3] Rajaḥ praśāntaṃ sahimo'dya vāyur—
Nidāghadoṣaprasaraḥ praśāntāḥ /
Sthitā hi yātrā Vasudhādhipānāṃ
Pravāsino yānti narāḥ svadeśān //
Nidrā śanaiḥ Keśavamabhyupaiti
Drutaṃ nadī sāgaramabhyupaiti /
Hṛṣṭā balākā ghanamabhyupaiti
Kāntā sakāmā priyamabhyupaiti //
Jātā vanāntāḥ śikisaṃpranṛttā
Jātā kadambāḥ sakadambaśākhāḥ /
Jātā vṛṣā goṣu samānakāma
Jātā mahī sasyavanābhirāma //
—Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa, 28
15, 25, 26.

The technique adopted by Vālmīki naturally draws attention of later theorists, who proceed carefully to formulate principles for use of poetic figures in poetry and to ascertain the exact position of the image in the texture of poetry. The earlier theorists are of opinion that a poetic figure infuses appeal in a specimen of poetic art and lies at the root of generation of disinterested bliss that is regarded as the end of poetic creation. This capacity of the poetic image to transfuse appeal into a specimen of poetic art receives recognition from Daṇḍin ; and contemporary rhetoricians agreeing with him regard the poetic figure as an indispensable element in poetry, since a poetic expression is that which has poetic appeal, and as this appeal owes its genesis to the poetic figure, this is an unavoidable factor in poetry. Though later Ālaṃkārikas try to remove the seeming contradiction between the importance of the poetic figure and the subservience of the poetic image by saying that the term Alaṃkāra is used in the broader sense of beauty in general, and when poetry is described as being acceptable through the Alaṃkāra,[4] what is really meant is that poetry becomes acceptable through charm, that is absolutely necessary to its very existence, still it is a fact that the importance of the image continues as an indispensable element in formation of the poetic texture ; and the name of the particular branch of learning continues to persist as Alaṃkāraśāstra, implying thereby the paramount importance of image in poetry.

The attempt to find out the exact relation between the poetic figure and the Rasa is first traceable in Ānandavardhana, who in the dictrine of Dhvani, enunciated by him assigns the central place of Rasa and points out the respective status of all the poetical elements recognised by earlier theoriticians in relation to Rasa. The Alaṃkāra remains a true instrument of decoration, Ānandavardhana says, so long as it goes to highten the emotional effect; and what is true of the poetic figure is true of other instruments of decoration as well, that is to say, all the means of embellishment in poetry turn to be real instruments of decoration only when they go to further the transplantation of the blissful emotive experience of the poet into the mind of the refined-reader. In the scheme of Dhvani-theory adumbrated by Ānandavardhana, thus the central place is assigned to Rasa, and no other poetic element is allowed to excel this centre of gravity of poetic creation in point of strikingness.[5] This consideration prompts the learned exponent of doctrine of Dhvani to put under taboo the use of such obscure figures as Yamaka and the like in a specimen of poetic art elevated to the status of Rasadhvani. In a Dhvanikāvya, it is said, the employment of the obscure figures like Alliteration, Paronomasia etc. point out to great inadvertence of the poet, even though he is endowed with strong poetic intuition.[6] Sanskrit Poetics speaks of two types of defects which usually vitiate a specimen of poetic art: (i) the defect springing from lack of culture, and (ii) the defect springing from lack of poetic intuition: of these two types of defects the first is capable of being covered by strong poetic genius of the poet, while the second is incapable of being covered by all possible means, and consequently stands in the way of aesthetic realisation. The defect arising out of employment of obscure figures testifies to lack of culture on part of the poet, but this is such a serious flaw that it is incapable of being covered even by the strongest creative genius of the poet. For this reason Ānandavardhana tenders advice of the poets of posterity to eschew scrupulously the use of obscure figures in poetry in profusion, so that the attainment of the emotive experience of the reader occurs unimpeded.

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[4] Kāvyaṃ grāhyamalaṃkārāt
saundaryamalaṃkāraḥ
—Kāvyālaṃkārasūtravṛtti

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[5] Vācyavācakacārutvahetūnāṃ vividhātmanām /
Rasādiparatā yatra sa dhvanerviṣayo mataḥ //
—Dhvanyāloka II.

[6] Dhvanyātmabhūte śṛṅgāre yamakādinibandhanam /
Śaktāvapi pramāditvaṃ Vipralambhe Viśeṣataḥ //
—Dhvanyāloka II

In this search after the reason which lies behind this advice tendered by the learned Dhvanikāra to eschew the use of obscure figures Ānandavardhana arrives at a general principle. The law of aesthetics demands, he says, that a real instrument of decoration is to be brought into being by the emotion in its urge to reveal itself. That poetic figure is regarded as one organically related to poetic texture which is created by the exuberance of feeling in the process of its self-expression, and consequently for the improvisation of which no separate effort is necessary on the part of the poet. The real test of a poetic image lies in its genesis through the same effort as is necessary for manifestation of the emotional mood, intended to be depicted in the specimen of literary art.[7] For the creation of a poetic-image therefore, the poet does not stand in need of taking recourse to a separate effort : as his mind remains absorbed on contemplation of the emotional mood, the image rushes forth spontaneously from the fountain-head of his imagiation, making it unnecessary thereby the help of another additional strenuous effort on the part of the poet. This assertion of the brilliant exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani is in agreement with the conception of poetic-intuition, which is described as that faculty which presents the expression and the expressed, the literary excellence and the poetic figure, the diction and the texture suitable for creation of poetry.[8] As a matter of fact, Rasa in poetry is not brought into being through combination of the word and meaning, the literary excellence and the image; but rather it is Rasa itself which creates all these elements in its urge to reveal its ownself. A parallel to this is found in the human body: in the human body life is not produced through combination of different limbs, but rather it is life itself which brings the different limbs into being in its endeavour to give expression to its ownself. In a similar manner, Rasa is not transfused in poetry through juxtaposition of different poetic-elements, but rather it is Rasa itself which creates all these elemens in the process of giving expression to its ownself. An illustration to such a poetic-image created by emotion is afforded by the stanza :

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[7] Rasākṣiptatayā yasya bandhaḥ śakyakriyo bhāvet/
Apṛthagyatnanirvartyaḥ so'laṃkāro dhvanau mataḥ//
—Dhvanyāloka, II.

[8] Sā ca Kāvyaghaṭanānukūlaśabdārthopasthitiḥ
—Rasagaṅgādhara, I

> Kapole patrālī Karatalanirodhena mṛditā
> Nipīto niḥśvāsairayamamṛtahṛdyo'dhararasaḥ/
> Muhuḥ Kaṇṭhe lagnastaralayati Vāṣpastanataṭīṃ
> Priyo manyurjātastava niranurodhe na tu vayam//

in which the metaphor superimposing the identity of the lover on the indignation of the irascible heroine is created through the same effort as is necessary for transplantation of the Poet's blissful experience into the mind of the connoisseur of poetic art : as the mind of the seer-poet remains absorbed on contemplation of the emotional-mood of love in separation, the brilliant poetic figure of metaphor rushes forth spontaneously from his concentrated mental-plane, making it unnecessary on his part to take the help of other external effort in order to effect production of the poetic figure. As for the improvisation of the obscure figure, the poet is constrained to take the help of an additional effort required for searching after suitable words, so they are incapable of being brought into organic-relation with the whole texture of poetry. Such figures as Simile, Metaphor etc. on the other hand are creations of the feeling, and as a matter of fact they are configurations of the feeling in a sense, since however astounding they might appear to the student of literary criticism, it is fact that for their improvisation the poet does not feel the necessity of taking recourse to an additional effort.[9] For this reason such poetic figures become conducive to suggestion of the sentiment which is the only end of all creative urge of the poet, and consequently become organically related to poetic art in the strictest sense of the term. We are thus conducted to the door-way to an organismic-theory of poetry, which demands the existence of organic-relation between the different elements in poetry, which has for its centre of gravity the Rasa of paramount importance.

II

Traits of the Successful Image

Coming to the actual principles relating to the use of poetic figure in poetry Ānandavardhana states that the image is always to be kept subservient to the emotive-content,—is to be incorporated or rejected in proper time in accordance with the feeling presented,—is not to be drawn to its logical extreme if such opulence is not relished by aesthetic sensibility,—and even though drawn to its furthest point is to be scrupulously kept subordinated to the emotional mood of paramount importance. At the first sight this advice tendered to the poet to keep his power of understanding active in the matter of the incorporation of the poetic figure seems to run contrary to the statement that the image is brought into being by the emotional-mood itself, as a result of which the intellect of the poet does not feel the necessity of taking recourse to a separate effort : this advice therefore is likely to take us away from the organismic-theory of poetry to the threshold of which we were conducted by the earlier statement of the brilliant exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani. A close analysis of the speculations of the learned Dhvanikāra however goes to show the correct state of things and to remove the apparent contradictions pointed out before. There are actually some images that are created along with the feeling in the process of poetic creation; these are capable of being described as brought out by the feeling itself (Rasākṣiptaḥ); but there are some images that are introduced at a late stage of this poetic process, and for the incorporation of this it becomes necessary on the part of the poet to keep his intellect active. The poetic-figure inserted in the very first phase of poetic creation are children of feeling: but those inserted in the last phase are products of intellect, and consequently some rules are to be observed for their incorporation so that they can be brought into organic-relation with the poetic texture itself. This leads us naturally to the discussion on the different phases of the poetic process, known commonly as vibrations or Kaviparispandas. One of the theories trying to explain the nature of Lakṣaṇā, as cited by Abhinavagupta in his commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata, speaks of three vibrations appearing in the creative process of the poet: in the first vibration the poet intuites the feeling and feeling-tone: in the second phase he selects the suitable poetic-figure and the literary embellishments and in the third phase the actual poetic texture comprised of sound and sense is brought into being.[10] This theory thus introduced the activity of critical intellect of the poet at a late stage of the creative process, in the first state of which this intellect remains inactive,—emotion alone reigning supreme. By enunciating the principles relating to the use of poetic figures that are created by critical intellect at a subsequent stage of creative process and by saying that such poetic images are to be adjudged by aesthetic sensibility, which is the sole adjudicater of poetic-elements, Ānadavardhana recognises the importance of both intellect and feeling in genesis of poetry; and maintains that for the improvisation of the poetic image, the one is as much necessary as the other. In these observations of Ānandavardhana therefore, we find a re-statement of the analysis of Vālmīki in a generalised form. As the first specimen of poetic art originated from the mind of Vālmīki, overflown with tragic-emotion, the seer experienced a profound sense of astonishment; and very soon he started to analyse the nature of poetic-creation produced. This employment of the critical intellect on the part of the seer to analyse the nature of Poetic-creation yielded good results, and helped his seer to arrive at the concept of the good and the great poetry. When Vālmīki arrived at the inner secret of good and great poetry by combining his intellect with feeling, it is only natural for the poet to build up a specimen of good and great poetic art by combining the power of understanding with the emotional mood. The emotive-content, no doubt, is of paramount importance in poetry, but the thought-content is none the less important, and in a specimen of the highest type of poetry a perfect balance is established between the thought and the emotive-content. Neither the emotive-content is to throw the poet off his feet nor the thought-content is to draw him into sophistication. If the poet is guided absolutely by his passion, the perceptions made by him are likely to be inaccurate: if on the other hand he is guided by intellect alone, then his poetry is not to cause impersonal bliss in the mind of the refined-appreciator, being degenerated into the lowest type of poetry, abounding in strikingness of sound and sense. Though in the creative process the feeling is of prime importance, still critical intellect is necessary to bridle the exuberance of feeling, so that the poet does not become inaccurate in his perception.

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[9] Niṣpattau āścaryabhūto'pi
rasasamāhitacetasaḥ Kaveḥ
ahaṃpūrvikayā parāpatanti.
—Dhvanyāloka II. Vṛtti,

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[10] Eteṣāṃ tu darśanam-Kaveḥ yaḥ pratibhātmā prathamaparispandataḥ tadvyāpārabalopanateṣu tāḥ guṇāḥ...... Śabdānamībhiḥśabdaiḥ arthanamībhiḥ arthaiḥ saṃghaṭayāmityevamātmakastu yaḥ tṛtīyaḥ Kaveḥ parispandaḥ tadhīnātmalābhādiḥ śabdārthātmaka Kāvyaśarīrasamśritāni vakṣyamāṇaśleṣādiguṇadaśakasamabhivyañjanavyāpārāṇi śabdārthopasaṃskāra Kalpāni kriyārūpanīti.

—Abhinavabhāratī, p. 380.

Enunciation of these principles by Ānandavardhana therefore testifies to his awareness of the whole problem relating to the conjoint-action of feeling and critical intellect in the matter of production of poetic-image, which cannot be successful without any one of them. A successful image thus is effected by emotion and intellect conjointly, acting in collaboration with each other ; and the extent of success obtained by the image depends on the co-operation existing between these two faculties—the feeling and the intellect.

A successful poetic-figure therefore, focuses at a given point of the imagination of the reader the integrated image of the whole theme, and consequently this is regarded as essential to attainment of aesthetic experience. Such a figure is incapable of being removed from the body of poetry easily, since it constitutes a part and parcel of the poetic texture ; and when theoriticians compare the poetic figure to the ordinary instrument of decoration, they only give expression the half the truth, since the poetic figure does not agree with the ordinary instruments of decoration on all points : while the latter is susceptible to removal easily, the former is not so. The poetic figure, Ānandavardhana says, is a means to attainment of aesthetic experience, and consequently care is to be taken to see that this does not excel the emotive-content in point of strikingness. An example of such an image is represented by that of the bee, which touches the quivering eye-corners of Śakuntalā,—hums near the vicinity of her ears and tastes her nectarine lip, as she attempts to keep it away by tossing of her arms.[11] This image of Kālidāsa allows the object of description to remain alone,—to shine in its own splendour, without obtaining any aid from other external factors. The external factors are generally introduced in order to present the object of description as clearly as possible : thus when the face is compared to the lotus, the profound charm of the face becomes clear to the appreciator. There appears such occasions, however, where greater effect is likely to emanate from presentation of the object of description in its plain and simple perspective, without getting it related to other external entities. As a matter of fact, there comes such a moment when the flower presented in its leafy surrounding makes a greater impact than being presented as related to external entities like the shield or the emblem of a particular feeling. A master artist is in a position to gauge the nature of impact that is likely to be made by the plain and simple truth and the truth presented in a round-about manner as bearing relation to an external object. And Kālidāsa is such a master artist ; he allows the humming bee,—the thing of beauty to remain alone,—to shine by itself in its own smiles and movements, because he feels that this technique is more suited to the depiction of the emotional mood. Here the pleasing image becomes a successful vehicle for communication of the poet's experience, and consequently this turns out to be true means of embellishment, —as one organically related to the poetic-art.

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[11] Calāpāṅgāṃ dṛṣṭiṃ spṛśasi bahuśo vepathumatīṃ
Rahasyākhyāyīva svanasi mṛdu karṇīntikacaraḥ /
Karau Vyādhunvatyāḥ pivasi ratisarvasvamadharaṃ
Vayaṃ tattvanveṣānmadhukara hatāstvam khalu kṛtī //
—Śakuntalā.

But the mere subservience of an image to the emotional mood is not sufficient : this is to be introduced or rejected in proper time in accordance with the feeling ; and if feeling demands, it is to be rejected in favour of an altogether new image, which is expected more helpful to revelation of the emotional mood. An example of such a poetic figure is furnished in an image drawn by Śrīharṣa : as the passionate lover looks at the garden creeper that resembles the lovely lady on a number of points,—the creeper displaying buds and the lady horripilation, the first exhibiting paleness through flowers and the second through pangs of separation, the first displaying tremor and the second showing fatigue and so on— the jealous queen experiences pain and her face becomes red in anger.[12] The technique used by the poet gives rise to the poetic figure of Pun, where the multimeaninged terms bring into expressions through the function of denotation, ideas more than one; and this poetic figure in the present case by showing the points on which the garden creeper meets on a common platform with the lovely girl introduces in the mental-plane of the refined-reader the lovely girl, and thereby enables him to experience the indignation of the jealous lady presented in the verse. The experience concerning indignation of the jealous lady obtained by the poet is transferred to the mind of the refined-reader; and it is the poetic figure Simile based on paronomasia that plays a very important role in the matter of transplantation of this experience. The poetic figure here has been introduced in proper time, since it puts the readers in the appropriate frame of mind, making it easy for them to realise the experience of the poet,—to share along with him the funds of feelings, common to humanity at large. The introduction of a poetic-figure therefore, is justified by the feeling itself, and that which is in a position to pave the path for communication of blissful experience by putting the reader in an appropriate frame of mind is to be regarded as one organically related to poetic-art, not being susceptible to easy removal through caprice of the composer or the experiencer. A poetic figure once introduced however is not to be always continued to its furthest point: if communication of the poet's experience demands its replacement by a better image, more conducive to the feeling, it is to be replaced in favour of the more helpful. This is exemplified by the image of Amaru: the Aśoka is red by fresh twing, the lover is attracted by the charming qualities of the girl; the tree attracts the bee, the separated lover is smitten by shafts of cupid, the touch of the lady's feet leads to blossoming of the tree, and the same leads to joy of the lover : the two thus have many points in common,—the only difference between them lying in the fact that while the tree as the name suggests is bereft of sorrow, the lover is in pain eternally.[13] The poetic-figure of Paronomasia, which introduces the similarity of the tree to the lover is not continued here up to the last point ; it is rejected in favour of the poetic-figure Vyatireka, which presents the distinction between the tree and the lover, and thereby brings into full relief the extent of pain experienced by the lover separated from his consort. Without this poetic-figure of Vyatireka the communication of poet's experience would have remained incomplete. This therefore plays a pominent role in the process of transference of the poetic experience and consequently turns out to be a part and parcel of the poetic texture itself.

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[12] Uddāmotkalikām Vipāṇḍurarucaṃ prārabdhajṛṃbhāṃ kṣaṇā
Dāyāsaṃ śvasanodgamairaviralairāta-nvatīmātmanaḥ /
Adyodyānalatāmimāṃ samadanāṃ nārīmivānyāṃ dhruvaṃ
Paśyan Kopavipāṭaladyuti mukhaṃ devyāḥ Kariṣyāmaham //
—Ratnāvalī.

Ānandavardhana tenders advice to the poets of posterity to consider Rasa, as the guiding principle of their creative art and to incorporate such images only as are accepted by aesthetic sensibility as conducive to attainment of emotive experience. The poetic figure, he says, is not to be drawn to its logical extreme if the emotional effect is likely to be hampered thereby. Amaru, an expert in the art of miniature word painting follows this principle and produces a wonderful effect by keeping under restrained the opulence of the image introduced. An illustration to this point is furnished by this splendid stanza, in which the action of the irascible lady is presented : the lover is taken to the abode of the lady after being tied by the noose of the creepery slender arm in presence of her friend ; and as the signs of dalliance manifested in the limbs of the lover are shown to him, he tries to attribute some other reason to those marks, and is chastised by the loving girl : such a lover is fortunate indeed.[14] By introducing the metaphor of the noose of creepery arm, that is to say, by superimposing the nature of the noose on the slender creepery arm of the girl, Amaru tries to bring into light the satisfaction experienced by the girl as she throws her arms round the body of the lover even though he has perpetrated an offence : he also tries to give expression to the feeling of awe and discomfort experienced by the lover, as he tries to avoid the lady presently through fear of detection of the signs of dalliance manifested in his limbs. Drawing of this Metaphor to its logical extreme would have demanded the superimposition of the confining cage on the abode of the girl and that of the fowler-lady on the girl herself ; but this would have absolutely marred the aesthetic effect, and instead of helping Rasa to reveal itself, it would have landed the emotional mood into jeopardy and prevented the attainment of emotive experience. Therefore, Amaru has not worked the Metaphor out in all its logical details ; his aesthetic sensibility has prevented him from granting opulence to the image already introduced. Here the mind of the poet is concentrated on contemplation of the erotic-emotion : he has before him the image of love in one of its charming moods and implications. The experience concerning this pleasing phase of love along with the moment in which the experience is obtained is to be transferred to the refined-reader, and such an image is to be selected which is in a position to render this transfer successful. The working out of the metaphor to its logical extreme would have communicated an experience which is far from pleasing one, presenting the charming phase of love ; it would have introduced a rather obnoxious aspect of love by placing the lover on an equal footing with the encaged parrot, subjected to torture by the lady, meeting on a common platform with the fowler-girl in point or her treatment of the encaged being. Amaru consequently shows a profound sense of beauty by arresting the Metaphor in conformity with the prevailing sentiment of eroticism ; and thereby creating an experience corresponding to that enjoyed by him in the mind of the connoisseur.

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[13] Raktastvaṃ navapallabhairahamapi Ślāghaiḥ priyāyā guṇai—
Stvāmāyānti śilīmukhāḥ smaradhanurmuktāḥ sakhe ! māmapi /
Kāntāpādatalāhatistava mude tadvanmamāpyāvayoḥ
Sarvaṃ tulyamaśoka ! Kevalamahaṃ dhātrā saśokaḥ kṛtaḥ
—Amaruśatakam.

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[14] Kopāt Komalalolabāhulatikāpāśena baddhvā dṛḍhaṃ
Nitvā vāsaniketanaṃ dayitayā sāyaṃ sakhīnāṃ puraḥ /
Bhūyo naivamiti skhalatkalagirā saṃsūcya duśceṣṭitaṃ
Dhanyo hanyaṭa eva nihnutiparaḥ preyānrudatyā hasan //

—Amaruśatakam.

But sometimes the attainment of emotive experience itself demands the working out of a poetic figure already introduced in all its logical details, and sometimes it becomes necessary to conduct the figure to its logical extreme for transplantation of the poet's blissful experience to the mind of the refined-reader. In such cases the opulence of the image is justified ; but here also as Ānandavardhana says care is to be taken to see that the poetic figure remains subservient to the emotional-mood, and does not excel the latter in point of strikingness. A poet of superb poetic skill of the caliber of Vālmīki and Kālidāsa alone is capable of carrying out the image to its logical extreme and at the same time of keeping it subordinate to the emotive-content. Poets of lesser caliber after go to show their skill in improvisation of the poetic-figure, but in doing this they often allow the extended image to suppress the emotional-content, as a result of which the Rasa fails to manifest itself in its full splendour. Poetry in which the far-fetched poetic-figure becomes the chief source of attraction is regarded by Ānandavardhana and his followers as poetry of the lowest Variety,—the Citra, which as the name suggests, is not real poetry in the strictest sense of the term. A balance, therefore, has to be struck between the obvious and the far-fetched : the obvious does not cause charm to the mind of the connoisseur. and the far-fetched taxes to a considerable extent the power of understanding of the appreciator, and consequently neither of the two is preferred ; what is commended is a balance between the two, and a poet of strong poetic genius alone is capable of striking this balance. In the Meghadūta, the actual text of message intended for the consort of the Yakṣa includes such an image in which the figure is neither too obvious nor too far-fetched,—neither extremely slender nor highly opulent,—neither incompetent to cause charm to the connoisseur nor unable to effect distinct revelation of the emotional content. The passionate lover, estranged from his consort and stationed in the slopes of Rāmagiri finds out the limbs of his lady-love in the creeper,—her glances in the eyes of the terror-stricken doe, the loveliness of her face in the moon,—tresses in the plumage of the eye-brows in the ripples of the flowing stream ; but it is extremely unfortunate that the similarity of the lady as a whole is not traceable anywhere.[15] The poetic figure introduced here is technically known as Utprekṣā, which consists in expression of doubt of peculiar nature with reference to the real state of a thing ; this figure is worked out logically in all its details, but the supreme poetic-intuition of Kālidāsa does not allow it to loose its connection with the emotional mood, intended to be depicted in the piece. The poetic-figure, even though rendered opulent helps the connoisseur to arrest the unique moment in which the blissful experience of the poet is obtained, and through that to enjoy a similar blissful experience. The image is constructed not by the obvious, as has lost its power of surprise, nor by the far-fetched, that stirrs up our intellect alone, as a result of which aesthetic-instinct fails to experience the charm of the emotional-mood. It is built up through a balance between the obvious and the far-fetched : neither the product of emotive-experience prevents the creation of intellect from causing the fascination of solving a puzzle nor the product of intellect keeps the emotive-content smothered beneath its huge mass of opulence. Such an image,

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[15] Śyāmāsvaṅgaṃ cakitahariṇīprekṣaṇe dṛṣṭipātaṃ
Vaktracchāyāṃ Śaśini Śikhināṃ barhabhāreṣu Keśān /
Utpaśyāmi pratanuṣu nadīvīciṣu bhrūvilāsān
Hantaikasthaṃ Kvacidapi nate bhīru ! sadṛśyamasti //

—Meghadūtam

therefore, is regarded as one organically related to poetic-art, and consequently a true Alaṃkāra in the strictest sense of the term.

The principle enunciated by the brilliant exponent of the doctrine of Dhvani shows that this learned critic regards poetry as an expression of passion through the medium of language with the help of such an image which becomes a true symbol of poet's unique experience Poetry, as a matter of fact, has two types of idea : the literal and the symbolic ; of these two, the literal is comprehended by all, and therefore is comparable to the external form of poetry ; but with the symbolic the case is different : it is capable of being cognised by the connoisseur alone through his aesthetic-instinct, due to the presence of which he catches the experience symbolised in the poem. And this process of arresting the symbol depends as much on the aesthetic instinct of the refined-reader, as on the competence of the poet to create this symbol through a successful image. It is for this reason that the creative artist and the receptive reader are regarded as constituting conjointly the essence of the Goddess of Speech ; this implies that the successful appreciation of poetry depends both on the poet and the critic. The poet creates a symbol of his blissful experience with the help of the image, that focuses at a given point of consciousness the brilliant experience along with the unique moment in which the experience is obtained. Special care, therefore, is to be taken for creation of a successful image competent to present the symbol of the poet's experience to the refined-reader, who is required to work out this experience in his own mind.[16]

The principle that the poetic figure forms a part and parcel of the poetic texture receives a brilliant exposition in the hands of Kuntaka, who in unequivocal terms declares the poetic figure as a constituent of the poetic-tissue, and says that the expression"the figure of poetry" is only a misnomer, since it implies the distinction between the poetic-figure and poetic-tissue,—the real truth lying in the fact that embellished expression itself is poetry.[17] Expanding this dictum Kuntaka comprehends the host of poetic figures under the Vakratā of the sentence, which according to him appears in manifold aspects. The new turn given to the sentence by the imaginative faculty of the poet, as a matter of fact, brings into full relief the moods and feelings of the characters, as also the experience of the poet, and enables the refined-reader to share the experiences of the characters and the poet. This peculiar turn is exampled by a verse from Raghuvamśam fourteenth, in which Sītā gives expression to her profound sense of frustration after being banished by Rāma in the vicinity of the hermitage of Vālmīki. On a previous occasion Rāma retired to the forest with her after abandoning the company of royalty ; as now he has come back to the capital and has been installed on the throne of the state, royalty has decided to take revenge on Sītā by sending her in exile again. The image of the Royal fortune unable to stand the happiness of Sītā exalted to the status of the chief queen of the emperor brings into light the extreme unjustifiability of the conduct of Rāma : on previous occasion, even though sent in exile he preferred to keep Sītā by his side, but now even though administering the affairs of kingdom from the Royal-seat, he has made up his mind to banish Sītā without any reason, so to say.[18] The poetic-figure brought into being by the imaginative faculty of the poet thus focuses at a given point of consciousness the feeling of Sītā that expresses itself through recognition extended to royalty as her co-wife. This poetic-figure of Utprekṣā, though very common in the field of poetry gets a new shape from the hand of Kālidāsa, and impresses on the refined-reader the intolerable nature of royalty, the spouse of the emperor Rāma, unable to stand the fortune of Sītā. Kālidāsa gives a brilliant turn to the expression and becomes successful in bringing into being such an image that presents the symbol of Sītā's experience. And only a poet of profound power of imagination alone is capable of drawing the image in such a way.

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[16] Āpūrvaṃ Yadvastu prathayati Vinā Kāraṇakatāṃ
Jagat grāvaprakhyaṃ nijarasabharāt sārayati ca /
Kramāt prakhyopākhyāprasarasubhagaṃ bhāsayati tat
Sarasvatyāstattvaṃ Kavisahṛdayākhyaṃ Vijayate //
—Locana. Introductory Stanza.

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[17] Alaṃkṛtiralaṃkāryāt apodhṛtya vivecyate /
Tadupāyatayā tattvaṃ sālaṃkārasya Kāvyatā //
—Vakroktijīvitam. I. 6.

[18] Upasthitāṃ pūrvamapāsya lakṣmīṃ
Vanaṃ mayā sārdhamasi prapannoḥ /
Tvāmāśrayaṃ prāpya tayā mu Kopāt
Sodhāsmi na tvatbhavane vasanti / —Raghuvaṃśam

In his attempt to underline the importance of the personality of the poet in creation of a successful image, Kuntaka cites a parallelism : just as in a picture he says, it is the genius of the painter which brings into being a living figure with the help of the familiar brush and the old colours, and it is this genius that is noticed separately from the familiar ingredients, similarly the intuition of the poet creates a charming specimen of poetic-art. with the help of the old expression and the well-known figure, and it is this individuality of the poet that is noticed as something distinct from the poetical-element, and consequently causes charm to the experiencer. The poetic-figures are old one, the expressions are repeated times without number, the same literary excellences are introduced from time to time : the poet starts with old materials, but the creation that is brought into being appears as a fresh one, causing profound surprise in the mind of the connoisseur.[19] It is the individuality of the poet which works behind the genesis of the successful image : it is due to this that instead of being a bundle of broken images the poetry appears as a stream of successfully integrated images competent to transplant the unique experience of the poet into the mind of the refined-reader. The principles relating to the use of poetic-figures, therefore, are of importance in poetry, but what is of paramount importance is the pleasing personality of the poet, which gives a new turn to the expression and the content, and through that to poetry as a whole. And in the whole host of our ancient rhetoricians Kuntaka is alone in recognising this supreme role of poetic individuality in genesis of the poetic-image.

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[19] Manoñjaphal akollekhavarṇacchāyā Śriyaḥ pṛtak /
Citrasyeva manohāri Kartuḥ Kimapi Kauśalam //
—Vakroktijīvitam III. 3

CHAPTER III

The Mahābhārata as a Specimen of Literary Art

I

Divergence between East & West

Oriental and occidental scholars differ widely among themselves on the exact nature of the Mahābhārata : while oriental-critics regarded the Mahābhārata as a brilliant source-book to be utilised by all poets of posterity apart from its being a treatise on economical theories, political principles and religious doctrines, occidental critics regard it as a collection of hopelessly jumbled facts compiled by an inefficient hand. These critics maintain that the Mahābhārata is not one poetic-production, but rather a whole literature, developed through different centuries. It is pointed out that the narrative describing the actual battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, who fought an intermecine battle over right to the Royal-throne of Hastināpūra constitutes the nucleus of the Epic ; and numerous other narratives which are absorbed into the original narrative are but accretions to it, being connected to the original story in a loose manner. It is further pointed out that foreign element to accumulate around the nucleus is represented by the stories relating to the life history of the warriors taking part in actual fight, and this accounts for incorporation of narratives intended to describe the achievements and expoits of Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana, of Arjuna and Karṇa, and so on. The second foreign matter to cluster around the original narrative is presented by pieces introducing discourses on practical politics ; these discourses are usually put in the mouth of the dying ancestors of Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas,—the Pitāmaha of hallowed memory, as also in the mouth of some seers who are regarded as authorities on the science of polity. As Pitāmaha Bhīṣma defers his death till the starting of the Uttarāyaṇa and awaits the arrival of the last moment lying in the bed of shafts, and still experiencing perfect peace and happiness, Yudhiṣṭhira the chief Pāṇḍava approaches him with a set of questions on the system of administration to be carried on by an ideal king; and Bhīṣma readily agrees to give answer to the questions put to him, as a result of which discussions on practical politics naturally crop up to get themselves absorbed readily into the frame of the great Epic. The fourth alien matter to swell the frame of the great Epic is comprised of the portions intended to issue instructions on religion, ethics and morality. As the Mahābhārata becomes more and more popular, the Brāhmins who were the chief custodians of literary activity in those days become extremely anxious to utilise the Epic as the medium for preaching their religious and moral dogmas and ethical principles. And they actually incorporated these dogmas and principles into the frame of the Epic. This explains the absorbtion of Śrīmadbhagavatgītā in the frame of the Mahābhārata, which contains apart from the Gītā discussions on principles relating to liberation, as also to code of conduct to be followed by the castes and the stages. The code of morality for the king is not neglected, and prescriptions that are usually found in treatises on polity are confronted with in the Mahābhārata. But this is not all: the development of the Mahābhārata has another story of its own. As literary activity passed on from the hands of the Brāhmins to the Buddhists with the establishment of the Buddhism as the state religion throughout the length and breadth of the country, Buddhist scholars become naturally eager to capture the popular Epic and to utilise it as the vehicle of their own religion and philosophy. As a result of translation of this eagerness of these Buddhists into actual practice, narratives intended to glorify the code of conduct prescribed in Buddhism became incorporated into the actual Epic. The Mahābhārata thus is a compandium of heterogeneous matters,—of story and philosophy, religion and ethics, politics and economics. Before the critical vision of the occidental academicians the Mahābhārata thus emerges as the formidable apparition of a literary monster that is gruesomely disfigured by accumulation of redundant limbs, stored through centuries of unprofitable labour. Some critics even address themselves to the embarrassing but impossible task of sorting out the contents of the Epic and of shifting out the original kernel from the disorderly mass of spurious abundance. In their extra-ordinary zeal for literary surgery these critics ignore the simple fact that despite its enormous bulk the Mahābhārata presents a communicable continuity of meaning.

Possibly because of this continuity of meaning that Indian tradition regards the Mahābhārata as a specimen of great literary art, the excellences of which are incapable of being analysed by mature poets even. It is said that just as life in earth is impossible without food, so literary-composition is impossible without the Mahābhārata which is utilised by all great poets as the source-book of their literary production in the same way as the paramount sovereign is utilised by seekers after wealth in order to attain prosperity. According to Indian tradition thus the great Epic is not merely a work on principles of polity or simply a treatise on religion or just a book on erotics and morality : above all it is a specimen of literary art, and that too of great and good poetry[1]. For this reason in order to substantiate his position that the poet is to keep his mind concentrated on one principal emotional mood, Ānandavardhana, the brilliant exponent of the theory of the suggestion refers to the Rāmāyaṇa as the outward manifestation of the tragic emotion, and the Mahābhārata as the external representation of the Quietistic-sentiment. The Rāmāyaṇa he says, testifies to the concentration of the poet's mind on the principal emotional mood of grief : as the poetic mind experiences the tragic on contemplation of which it remains fixed, and tries to give expression to this tragic through the medium of language, the Rāmāyaṇa is brought into being. And this is the case with the Mahābhārata as well : as the poetic mind experiences the Quietistic and tries to give expression to it in order to transfer similar feeling in the mind of the refined reader, the Mahābhārata is produced. The great seer Vyāsa tries to cause aversion to worldy objects in the minds of the refined readers by describing the transience of treasures and royal glories ; and as he puts into actual desire of his poetic mind, the great Epic is produced. The different branches of lerning, particularly those on liberation also are intended to cause aversion to worldly-objects in the minds of its readers ; but the difference of the epic Mahābhārata from these treatises lies in the fact that while through other branches of learning sheer aversion to worldly objects is produced, through the Mahākāvya-Mahābhārata pleasure also is experienced ; and what is actually relished is happiness springing from annihilation of all desires. Such systems of philosophy as the Vedānta and the like pointout the path for attainment of liberation, which is described as the state of oneness with the Supreme Spirit : but the epic Mahābhārata being a specimen of poetic art leads to that bonded-liberated state, that is regarded as the Rasa,—the state of poetic experience,—in which the mind is neither liberated fully from the shackles imposed by the ego nor bound absolutely by the small individuality of the experiencer. Thus the central pivot in the Mahābhārata is regarded as the Śāntarasa or the Quietistic Emotion, which refers to a state of experience in which the experiencer savours delight, springing from annihilation of all desires. That delight springs from annihilation of total desires is an established fact, and destruction of all urges in totality also is not a myth. It is testified to our common experience that a state of satiety is reached at the time of taking food, when even the most dainty dish is not relished. The point that cessation of desires is not possible, therefore, is untenable : when annihilation of urges is actually experienced at the time of taking food, there is no reason as to why it will not be experienced at the time of enjoying Poetry. So recognition is sure to be extended to the Quietistic Emotion, whose outward manifestation is represented by the Mahābhārata, in the same way as the external manifestation of the tragic is represented by the Rāmāyaṇa : in the Mahābhārata the predominent sentiment is undoubtedly the emotion of Quietism.[2]

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[1] Arthaśāstramidaṃ proktaṃ dharmaśāstramidaṃ mahat /
Kāmaśāstramidaṃ proktaṃ Vyāsenāmitabuddhinā //

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Anāśrityaitadākhyānaṃ kathā bhuvi na vidyate /
Āhāramanapāśritya Śarīrasyeva dhāraṇam //
Idaṃ Kavivaraiḥ sarvairākhyānamupajivyate /
Udayaprepsubhirbhṛtyairabhijāta iveśvaraḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Pākasaṃgrahaparva, II,
Verss, 363, 368-69.

This shows that Ānandavardhana regards the Mahābhārata as one poetic production, having beginning, middle and end, in which there exists an indelible print of single-mindedness, of a certain unity of drive and direction, of a continuum of spirit and purpose, which no anatomical dissection can easily dispense with. There are certainly same external appendages to the poetry of the Mahābhārata, and it is also a fact that the course of the narrative is frequently obstructed by these extraneous elements, but it is to be borne in mind that the epic Mahābhārata is not merely a product of pure literary art : its very multiplicity may turn out to a grievous fault, that would make it assume the look of a literary monster, but it is always to be remembered that it is a compendium of poetics and religion, ethics and philosophy—all in a single volume. The Mahābhārata belongs to an age when literature is a separate branch of art with its norms, canons and character has not yet established itself. In the earliest age from the Samhitās down to the Upanisads, literature, philosophy and religion stand undifferentiated in an integrated pattern of expression, which communicates a number of values in a single effort. The philosophical hymns of the Ṛgveda thus try to probe into the mystery lying behind the universe, and thereby to solve the riddle of the world, but the Ṛgvedic seer is competent enough to take an imaginative flight and through that to give expression to the ultimate truth in a charming manner : thus the content of philosophy is transformed into the content of Poetry, and the philosophical truth becomes identical with the poetic felt-truth, so much so that, it becomes difficult to separate the one from other. And this is the case with the Upaniṣads also, where the philosopher is gifted with poetic-intuition, as a result of which the philosophical truth converges into the poetic truth. As a matter of fact, the philosophical hymns of the Vedas and the profound verses of the Upaniṣads are unique examples of literature sublimited to literature. What happens in the case of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads happens in the case of the Mahābhārata also ; here the ultimate value of human existence, as revealed to profound genius of Vyāsa converges into the values obtained through philosophical or religious or political or ethical insight. It is significant, therefore, that the Epic Mahābhārata is regarded as the highest type of Poetry, apart from being recognised as a treatises on polity, religion and erotics : it is further pointed out that the recital of these treatises lead to acquisition of religious merit and fame, and while those who dishonour the Epic are dubbed as sinners, those who honour are praised as sensible, right-thinking persons, achieving the highest type of religious merit through recital of the work.[3] The very designation given to Epic shows the multiplicity of topics introduced in it as also its greatness, since, what is actually translated into practice in the work is a noble and lofty ideal, as represented by that of the Pāṇḍavas,—an ideal which ultimately comes out successful in the conflict of ideals.

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[2] Mahābhārate 'pi Śāstrarūpaṃ Kāvyacchāyānvayini vṛṣṇipāṇḍava—
virasāvasānvaimanasyadāyinīṃ samāptimupanibadhnatā
mahāmuninā Vairāgyajananatātparyaṃ prādhanyena
svaprabandhasya darśayatā mokṣalakṣaṇaḥ puruṣārthaḥ
ţānto rasaśca mukhyatayā vivakṣāviṣayatvena sūcitaḥ.
—Dhvanyāloka, IV. Vṛtti-on Kārikā 5.

II

Conflict of Values

The assertion that literature is a criticism of life poses before us some challenging questions, the most pertinent among which is that relating to the nature of the highest ideal,—the value of human existence,—a question which is the most fundamental also. This is rather one of the most vexed questions in the domain of art, literature and philosophy ; and even the most modern patterns of philosophy and literature are found renewing this question for future generation. The Vedas and the Upanisads have tried to solve it. Their answer may not be accepted as final, but this is a fact that they provide very valuable data for future guidance and direction, which can be utilised profitably in order to arrive at a better and happier solution to the problem. An attempt to find out this better and happier answer is traced in the Mahābhārata, which is considered as the direct heir to the Upaniṣads atleast from the point view of scriptural sanctity.

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[3] Asya Kāvyasya Kavayo na samarthā viśeṣaṇe /
Sādhoriva gṛhasthasya śesāśtraya ivāśramāḥ //

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Dvaipāyanoṣṭhapuṭaniḥsṛtamaprameyam
Punyaṃ Pavitramatha pāpaharaṃ śivaṃ ca /
Yo bhāratam samadhigacchati vācyamānaṃ
Kiṃ tasya puṣkarajalairabhiṣecanena //
—Mahābhārata, Pākasaṃgrahaparvan II Verses 390 & 392.

The great epic Mahābhārata is usually regarded by the critic as a repository of ancient ballad Poetry, exalting the heroic deeds of the past : it is said that same talented author combined these lore of heroic legends into the form of a great poem, around which with passage of time has accumulated an irrelevant laxuriance of ethics, politics, religion and philosophy. This opinion of the modern critic however shows an unfortunate indifference to the fact that there is a deep and pervasive meaning through the whole of the Mahābhārata,—a remarkable conformity of spirit, a significant inter-communication of meaning between the beginning, the middle and the end of the Epic. The reader of greater insight and understanding does not afford to miss it, because to miss is to lose the total perspective, which any valid literary judgement can never neglect.

From the standpoint of principles of criticism, therefore, the Mahābhārata is a single literary production, characterised by the revelation of the Quietistic Emotion, leading ultimately the reader to appreciate the value of poetic liberation. The modern reader also finds an inter-communication of meaning amongst the different parts of the Mahābhārata and regards it as a single specimen of literary art. The question of the value of human existence is posed in the broader perspective in the Mahābhārata and this perennial question ever waiting for an answer is tackled with profound success in the Epic. It is really significant that the introduction to the epic or the Anukramaṇikāparva is comprised mostly of a collection of stanzas, which usually goes by the name of Dhṛtarāṣṭravilāpa or the lamentations of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and which give us for the first time the summary of the contents upto the end of the great killing of Kurukṣetra. The Parvānusaṃgrahaparva, which follows it contains a rather dry summary of the eighteen books finding place in the whole Epic. The bewailings of Dhṛtarāṣṭra appear in his address to Sañjaya and the reader does not miss a look at the pathetic figure of a forlorn father opening his bleeding heart to him. He says to Sañjaya: when the news of Arjuna piercing the mark and the tidings of Draupadī being insulted by Duḥśāsana reach him, he gives up all his hope for victory when he hears of lord Kṛṣṇa supplying garments to Draupadī ceaselessly, he loses all hope for a successful march against the Pāṇḍavas: when he hears of the blood of Duḥśāsana being drunk by Bhīmasena, he cherishes no hope for winning of the Kauravas in the war. This strain continues and in course of opening his bleeding heart to Sañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra narrates practically all the important incidents of the Kurukṣetra war.[4] The old and infirm king, blind of eyes reveals himself as an erstwhile important monarch cursed with an acute love for fact: he unfailingly feels the foot-steps of the impending doom, but cannot exert himself to right the wrong,—to check his insolent sons and thereby to stop the great Kurukṣetra killing. More than once he is reproached by Gāndhārī, his irreproachable wife, the most magnificient female character in the whole Sanskrit literature, who squarely fixes the total responsibility for the massive carnage on her blind husband. The tragedy of the Epic seems to be concentrated in this dissolute king, who is left to recollect the days of peace and glory alone sitting in the ruins of Kurukṣetra without any hope or salvaging anything: like an apparition he stalks over the Epic field feeling the future of the victorious Pāṇḍavas with his uncanny sighs. This Anukramaṇikāparva of the Mahābhārata impresses on the refined reader the futility of the worldly existence and enables him to realise the greatness of the value of human existence. Of all the rights granted to mankind the most important one is the right to live: the right of humanity to live is an absolute value, and the Mahābhārata shows how in the conflict of values this ultimate absolute value comes out in flying colours shining in its own splendour.

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[4] Yadāśrauṣaṃ dhanurāyamya citraṃ
Viddhaṃ lakṣyaṃ pātitaṃ vaipṛthivyām /
Kṛṣṇāṃ hṛtāṃ prekeṣatāṃ sarvarājñāṃ
Tadā nāśaṃse vijayāya sañjaya //
Yadāśrauṣaṃ bhīmasenena pītaṃ
Raktaṃ bhrāturyudhi duḥśāsanasya /
Nivāritaṃ nānyatamena bhīmaṃ
Tadā ... ... //

—Mahābhārata, Anukramaṇikāparva, I. 150, 204.

An analysis of the characters of the Mahābhārata is necessary to have an idea of the message of the Mahābhārata,—of the highest place assigned to the right to live in the world. Yudhiṣṭhira, the hero of the Epic is presented as an unhappy victor who is assailed by a sense of the guilt of bloody carnage, ever conscious of the hallowness of the victory. He finds himself at the head of an empire which is a waste land. He senses his soul being changed with the cold breaths of the old king with whom he has a community of feeling. The victorious king experiences feelings similar to those experienced by the father of vanquished Kauravas and here in lies the magnificencc of Yudhiṣṭhir's character. In one sense he is the greatest tragic hero of the Epic: he kills his enemies with unwilling hands and drags his unwilling legs to the throne of Hastināpura: and this unhappiness of a victor's heart bleeding for the vanquished invests him with a stately tragic grandeur. The great Yudhiṣṭhira manages to adhere to his high ideals of moral conduct, even though surrounded by persons like Bhīma and Draupadī, who always insist on taking to vigorous resistance to cruel unfairness. Leaving in exile Bhīma muses over all that happened and is provoked into a challenging utterance; he says that the philosophy of Yudhiṣṭhira is practically a philosophy of the eunuch: it is only coward who cherishes sterile despair, and the warrior's way to salvation is through resistance to evil. In utter dispondency Draupadī too curses her sad lot: men are puppets in the hands of God: destiny drags them here and there like a bullock led by the rope or the tree drifted by the current of the river. But no favourable response is received from the stately tragic hero Yudhiṣṭhira. To Bhīma he tenders advice on the code of moral conduct and the ethics of warfare and to Draupadī he speaks of the greatness of the cosmic order and implores her to have faith on the existence of a perfect order in the universe. The thoughts of Draupadī indeed are the thoughts of those whose faith in the cosmic-order has been destroyed : in order to understand the laws of world it is necessary to have quietism, peace and holiness. Yudhiṣṭhira is convinced of the fact that the world is not likely to progress in the injured person returneth to his injuries,—if the chestised chestiseth in return. The message of peace, tolerance and quietism thus finds expression in the words of Yudhiṣṭhira, who was a matter of fact is the symbol of the great message of the Epic. In order to bring out the entire philosophy of life of this great character, Vyāsa introduces an interesting story. While in exile the Pāṇḍava brothers go to a lake to fetch water : the lake is inhabited by a semi-divine being, who puts riddles to them for solution. The riddles remain unsolved and all the brothers except Yudhiṣṭhira fall in a faint. When the riddles are put to Yudhiṣṭhira he finds out proper solution to them to the great satisfaction of the semi-divine being, who brings back to life all the four brothers subsequently. In reply to the question : What makes the sun rise ? What makes it set ? Where on does it rest ?—Yudhiṣṭhira replies : it is Brahman who makes the sun rise : it is eternal law that makes it set : it is truth on which it reposes. These replies show that Yudhiṣṭhira is convinced of the fact that the cosmos is an order governed by the laws of truth and nature. In reply to the second question : on what depends the status of the Brāhmaṇa ?—Yudhiṣṭhira says : this status of the Brāhmaṇa does not depend on the heredity or knowledge, but on pure conduct alone, giving expression thereby to his ideal of social leadership. Yudhiṣṭhira regards anger as the sole factor responsible for causing frustration, cupidity as the sole cause of grief, the surrender of which makes one rich : peace as the only factor leading to contentment of the soul and pity consisting in desire to do good to all as the highest goal of human existence.[5] As Yudhiṣṭhira professes this philosophy of life so he experiences sorrow at the massacre of his enemies and when asked to ascend the throne of Hastināpura, he does it rather unwillingly. He knows that the tragedy of the war does not belong to the unconscious dead, but to the morally conscious survivals, who are left with a burning and smoking heart to rummage in the ruins. Standing before the half-raised body of Duryodhana Yudhiṣṭhira rightly says: the tragedy is not yours, but ours; we are doomed to live the hell of a life cursed by millions of disconsolate widows. This single utterance is in a position to bring into light Yudhiṣṭhira's brilliant attitude to life. He is convinced of the fact that the most fundamental moral value is to save mankind from war and annihilation,—from death and destruction.

III

Dexterity in Characterisation

Vyāsa's dexterity in handling characters reveals itself to its fullest extent in the character of Karṇa, who is presented as a victim to circumstances throughout his whole career. Karṇa is born of Kuntī in her maidenhood as she invoked sun-God to bliss her with a bonny son. As the pray of Kuntī is fulfilled, she gets extremely frightened and abandon the new born baby, who is ultimately brought up by a charioteer. Duryodhana befriends him and he becomes his chief lieutenant. Inspite of his bravery and skill in archery, Karṇa continues to be despised in the world, because of his low origin ; though he is the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, still the world sees him as the son of a charioteer, and consequently treats him with contempt. He is generous in his gifts, but in his acts of munificence there exists a suppressed desire to put an end to the glory of the aristocracy in point of presentation of rich gifts. Thus when Indra approaches him for the armour and ear-rings received from the Sun-God and making him invincible in the battle, Karṇa parts with these equipment so important to an warrior and shows a very good gesture. Before the bloody-battle of Kuruṣetra is fought, Kuntī tries to win him over to the side of the Pāṇḍavas by revealing to him to his real origin, but the great fighter is unwilling to go to the side of the mother, who once deserted him to maintain a show of chastity and to forsake the side of Duryodhana, who once maintained his prestige by placing him on the throne of the Aṅga state. The greatest rival of Karṇa is presented in the character of Arjuna, who is noted for his skill in archery, and to whom the world gives pre-eminence simply because of the fact that he is born in a noble family in sharp contrast to Karṇa of low-origin. In the actual fight Karṇa is slain by Arjuna, but this is not a clean victory for the latter, since the former is attacked when his chariot-wheels begin sinking into the mire and he experiences difficulty in moving the chariot. Vyāsa presents the character of Karṇa with all his complexities,—his virtues and vices, but inspite of his faults, he remains as most lovable character in the Epic, since he loses in all spheres due to his low-origin or through the machinations of cruel destiny. Throughout the Epic, Karṇa appears as a victim of circumstances, and goes once more to establish the principle that human energy is of no avail in its confrontation with destiny. Presentation of the character of Karṇa, in this manner, goes to generate the feeling of Quietism in the mind of the refined-reader by convincing him of the fruitlessness of human energy in its strife with circumstances. The mind of the seer Vyāsa is concentrated in contemplation of the Quietistic Emotion, and as his mind remains absorbed, the characters are automatically created in such a manner that they prove themselves conducive to attainment of experience of the Quietistic.[6]

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[5] Kiṃ svidādityamunnayati Ke ca tasyābhitaścarāḥ /
Kaścainamastaṃ nayati kasminśca pratitiṣṭhati //
Brahmādityamunnayati devāstasyābhitaścarāḥ /
Dharmaścāstaṃ nayati ca satya ca pratitiṣṭhati //

* * * * * *

Kiṃ nu hitvā priyo bhavati
Kiṃ nu hitvā na śocati /
Kiṃ nu hitvārthavān bhavati
Kiṃ nu hitvā sukhi bhavet //
Manaṃ hitvā priyo bhavati
Krodhaṃ hitvā na śocati /
Lobhaṃ hitvā sukhī bhavet //

—Mahābhārata III. 313. Verses—45, 46, 77, 78

Another victim to circumstances is presented in the character of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who is not in opposition to control his unruly sons, because of his excessive affection for them, which makes him blind to their faults. At the initial stage, he tries to normalise the relations between his own sons and the sons of his younger brother, but soon he succumbs to the pressures of his sons. He fails to prevent them from playing tricks with the Pāṇḍavas ; and when things go wrong he takes cover under fatalism, and says what is destined is incapable of being prevented. The blind king thus becomes blind in point of morality also ; and by unfolding the character of Dhṛtarāṣṭra in this manner Vyāsa possibly wants to impress on the reader the defeat of human will in its encounter with unfavourable circumstances : and this description of defeat proves ultimately helpful to depiction of the Quietistic. The sentiment of Quietism, it is said is nurtured by the feeling of transience of the ordinary world ; and in order to focus the attention of the reader on the transitoriness of human existence, Vyāsa creates the character of Vidura, who thought excluded from the nobility is respected by everybody for his sober and wide counsels. Vidura is an expert in bringing home moral values with the help of fine parables. Thus there is the parable of the traveller, who loses his way in a terrible forest and falls into a well to find him caught by the intertwined branches of a creeper ; but his predicament increases since a terrible six-headed tusker appears on the surface on the well and a dragon lies on the bottom with its mouth open eager to devour the traveller, in case he slips from the branches. These branches contain nevertheless honey-comb, inhabited by multitude of bees preparing honey : as drops of honey fall downward the man sips it, forgetting all about his predicament. With his characteristic out-look Vidura explains the forest as the world of existence, the well as the body, the dragon as the time, the beasts of prey as the diseases which frequent the human-body, the creeper as the hope of life and drops of honey as sensual enjoyment. Then parable undoubtedly intended to bring into full relief the state of worldly existence as also the urge of the human being to live in the world full of diseases and miseries. As the refined-reader takes note of this miserable state of worldly existence, he cultivates an aversion to the world as a whole, and consequently experiences the Quietistic.[7]

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[6] Pāṇḍavādicaritavarṇanasyāpi vairāgyajananatātparyāt Vairāgyasya ca mokṣamulatvāt mokṣasya ca bhagavatprāptyupāyatvena mukhyatayā gītādiṣu prodarśitatvāt parabrahmaprāptyupāyatvameva.

—Dhvanyāloka, IV, Vṛtti on Kārikā 5.

But if the Mahābhārata accepts the transience of the individuals and empires, it equally accepts the doctrine of heroic activism and rejects the attitude that goes to cultivate denial of the world. This heroic activism reveals itself to its fullest extent in the character of Duryodhana, the symbol of princely-pride. Duryodhana dies a princely death, with pride unhumbled ; without remorse without a sign of repentence. His cruel deeds against Pāṇḍavas are unpardonable from the standpoint of ethics, but this usually proceeds from the firm belief of this great warrior in the principle that nothing is unfair in politics. In his attempt to establish his ownself, or in otherwords to translate into practice his ideal of self-affirmation, he finds in fair to eliminate all the possible claimants and contestants to the throne. When Duryodhana is to choose between the right to property and the right to live peacefully in the brilliant world, he chooses the former, and it is his princely pride of affirming this right to property that inspires him to plunge into annihilation when the last offer of conciliation of the Pāṇḍavas is rejected by him, the reader becomes convinced of his sincerity in belief that the kingdom rightfully belongs to him and his brothers. Really Duryodhāna believes that he is legally entitled to enjoy the entire kingdom Hastināpura ; and when his last moment approaches, he dies comfortably convinced of the righteousness of his cause and the superiority of his valour. And if the cruel deeds of Duryodhana are unpardonable from the standpoint of social ethics, the attack of the Pāṇḍavas against him is equally unpardonable from the standpoint of ethics of war-fare. At the instigation of Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma strikes him with mace below his belt,—an onslaught prohibited according to the codes of war-fare ; aflame with anger, the hero unfairly struck down with broken thighs dies, but before that he half-raises his body from the ground like a serpent on tail, and consumes Kṛṣṇa, the architect of unfair fight with blazing words. In reply to the speech of Kṛṣṇa he gives evidence of his own princely pride and say ; "I have ruled over the earth and enjoyed the prosperity of kingdom. I have followed the path of political ethics and have reached by life's end, which is covetable to all warriors. By courting death in the battle-field I will soon find myself stationed in the heaven ; you alone will be left in the earth to live a life of hell." This speech of Duryodhana is received by the Gods with applause ; flowers raindown from the sky,—celestial musicians burst into melodious music, —nynphs go on singing his praise ; and ultimately Duryodhana is conducted to the heaven. As the heroic activism of the brave warrior is rewarded, the Pāṅḍavas with Kṛṣṇa in their forefront stand dazed, with their heads hungdown in shame at the sight of this disproportionate honour done to Duryodhana by the denizens of the heaven.[8] The speech of Duryodhana in which a confident reply is given to Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas occupies a pre-eminent place in the literature of ethics of war-fare. Though the conduct of Duryodhana in waging war against the Pāṇḍavas is questionable, still Vyāsa presents him as a brave warrior, and rewards his heroic activism amply. With perfect ease and balance Duryodhana probes into the springs of human actions and tries to findout a justification for apparently irrational actions. The attitude of Vyāsa is that of a critic of life, who is objective in exposing the weakness and generous in emphasizing the greatness of man. Unfortunately Duryodhana does not breath his last as his speech to Kṛṣṇa concludes : the author of the Mahābhārata spares a few more moments to him so that he can take vengeance on the Pāṇḍavas ; and Duryodhana seizes of all these opportunities and takes a most cruel revenge by carrying out an extensive massacre on the sleeping warriors resting in the Pāṇḍava Camp.

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[7] Tadevamanukramaṇīnirdiṣṭena vākyena bhagavadvyatirekiṇaḥ sarvasyānyasya anityatāṃ prakāśayatā mokṣalakṣaṇa evaikaḥ paraḥ puruṣārthaḥ śāstranaye, kāvyanaye ca tṛṣṇākṣayasukhaparipṣalakṣaṇaḥ śānto raso mahābhāratasyāṅgitvena vivakṣita iti supratipāditam. —Dhvanyāloka IV, 5 Vṛtti.

The death of Duryodhana concludes the first round of the Bhārata-tragedy, which leaves only ten survivers. The Epic opens with lamentations of the old king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, which is intended to cause aversion to world in the minds of readers ; and it is extremely interesting that bewailings of

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[8] Aditaṃ vidivad dattaṃ bhūḥ praśāstā sasāgarā /
Murdhri sthitamamitrāṇāṃ ko nu svantataro mayā //
Yadiṣṭaṃ kṣatrabandhūnāṃ svadharmmanupaśyatām /
Tadidaṃ nidhanaṃ prāptaṃ ko nu Svantataro mayā //

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Sasuhṛd sānugaścaiva svargaṃ gantāhamacyuta /
Yuyaṃ nihatasaṃkalpāḥ śocanto vartayiṣyatha //

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Asya vākyasya nidhane kururājasya dhīmataḥ /
Apatat sumahat varṣaṃ puṣpānāṃ puṇyagandhinām //
—Mahābhārata, Śalyaparva. 61. 50, 51, 53, 54.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra also conclude with a reference to this fact of ten survivals, impressing on us the infinite void in which victors will have to swing along with it the transience and futility of earthly existence. Just as the tragic cry of the Krounca expresses itself in manifold forms in the Rāmāyaṇa, so the bewailings of a bleeding heart also reveal itself in different forms : and one such transformation of bewailings is repre-presented by the lamentation of Gāndhārī, occuring in the Strīparva that serves as the connecting link between the first and second rounds of the tragedy. In the forlorn battle field of Kurukṣetra covered with millions of melting corpses, Gāndhāri stands alone with her heart bleeding for the fallen millions of both sides,—for sorrow experienced by humanity at large. Gāndhārī realises the futility of heroic activism, and that too by her sons ; and as she starts to pronounce a terrible curse on Kṛṣṇa, the chief architect of this massacre, Kṛṣṇa receives it with stoic-calm and says that he is destined to suffer the results of his own deeds.[9] Destruction as a matter of fact, never remains alone : it lets loose a chain of destruction, which distroys the architect of annihilation, as well ; and when this is done, the cycle of destruction becomes complete. By presenting the law of eternal destruction in this manner, Vyāsa wants to impress on the reader the transience of worldly-existence, and thereby enables him to attain experience of the Quietistic.

The epic Mahābhārata however does not end with the death of Kṛṣṇa. Vyāsa deliberately adds the Svargārohana-parva, which presents a promise of hope, of peace and calm and tranquility, which men are in a position to enjoy, as soon as they rise above the pettiness of the world,—above enmity and bitterness, parochialism and narrowness, greed and selfishness, egotism and hollowness, which often make this beautiful world unfit for human habitation. As the eldest Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira reaches the heavenly region, he is surprised to see Duryodhana seated on a shining throne there : and this comes rather as a shock to him. The heroes who fought bitterly in the world are thus presented meeting in peace in the heaven. This realisation of peace possibly springs from complete disillusionment with a royal grandeur haunted by millions of the dead. This disillusionment occurs as Kṛṣṇa the chief architect of destruction himself falls a victim to the law of Mahākāla unleashed by him, and it is significant that as the Pāṇḍavas set out for their last journey, they proclaim victory to the law of Kāla.[10] The law of Kāla is the law of value also. As a matter of fact the epic Mahābhārata presents a conflict of values and tries to probe into the fundamental question of the value of human existence. It takes up squarely the question : what is the value of human existence, and ultimately says that the value of human existence lies in making life as livable as possible,—in living in the world peacefully and in allowing others to enjoy perfect peace. This highest value of human existence is realised by Yudhiṣṭhira of all the heroes, and so millions of readers install him in the hearts of their heart as the great Dharmarāja. Unlike Duryodhana he does not regard the right to property as of paramount importance : to him it is the right to live peacefully along with others that constitutes the Absolute value. Thus Duryodhana represents the incarnation of Relative value, while Yudhiṣṭhira stands for Absolute Value : the confrontation between Yudhiṣṭhira and

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[9] Tavāpyevaṃ hatasutā nihatajñātibāndhavāḥ /
Striyaḥ paripatiṣyanti yathaita bharatastriyaḥ //
Tacchrutvā vacanaṃ ghoraṃ vāsudevo mahāmanāḥ /
Uvāca devīṃ gāndhārimīṣadabhyutsmayanniva //
Jāne hametadapyevaṃ cīrnaṃ carasikṣatriye //
Daivadeva vinaśyanti vṛṣṇayo nātra saṃsayaḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Strīparva, 25. 46, 47, 48

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[10] Ityuktaḥ sa tu kaunteyaḥ kālaḥ kāla iti brūvan /
Anvapadyat tad vākyaṃ bhrāturjyeṣṭhasya dhīmataḥ //
Kālaḥ pacati bhūtāni sarvāṇyeva mahāmate /
Kālapāśamahaṃ manye tvampai draṣṭumarhasi //
—Mahābhārata, Mahāprasthānikparva I. 3—4.

Duryodhana therefore, is really a confrontation between Relative value and Absolute value. In this confrontation Vyāsa describes the Absolute Value as coming out in flying colours and establishing itself in a solid foundation. Vyāsa, therefore, is eager to allow men to live peacefully in the universe; but that does not mean that he eschews violence at all cost. Violence is to be met first with pacifism, but if unresisted violence tends to gather volume and becomes multiplied, it is to be resisted with all strength. Yudhiṣṭhira applies this principle fully: times without number he extends offers of conciliation to the warring Kauravas; but when Duryodhana rejects the last offer of conciliation, violence is met with violence,—and the stage is finally set for total destruction. And Kṛṣṇa appears at this stage as the law of Mahākāla,—the incarnation of destruction. It is not without significance, therefore, that Vyāsa describes this great character in the Epic as containing in him the dreadful revelation of all-pervasive destruction. The law of life changes occasionally to the law of destruction; and Kṛṣṇa finds it very easy for him to move from the role of a tireless peace-maker to that of a relentless annihilator. The Mahābhārata thus tenders advice in the sweet manner of the beloved to humanity at large to live peacefully along with others,—to make live as livable as possible, and ultimately to realise the transitoriness of worldly existence and through that to experience joy springing from annihilation of all desires. This single message is presented by the epic Mahābhārata and in it merge all the social, religious and ethical values of man; and it is for this reason that in addition to being simply a specimen of literary art, the Mahābhārata is regarded as a treatises on ethics, religion and philosophy. But this does not go to take away the character of Poetry from the Epic: as a matter of fact the Mahābhārata is an out and out specimen of poetic art.

IV

Excellence of Poetic Image

In a specimen of literary art what is of paramount importance is the unique blissful experience communicated through the medium of language along with the unrivalled moment in which the experience is obtained, and as the refined-reader appreciates this specimen of Poetic Art, he not only experiences the brilliant stuff, but the unparalled moment also, in which this stuff of experience is obtained. And what is of greater importance is the splendid poetic genius of the literary artist that gives a peculiar shape to the whole composition and expresses itself through grand conception of the plot, charming delineation of characters, pleasing presentation of the poetic image ; and with the help of all these through formation of an organic-whole. In this respect Poetry is comparable to a picture : in a picture the lines of colour are not of real significance : what gives a splendid form to the picture is the dexterity of the artist, revealed through juxtaposition of lines of colour ; in a specimen of poetic art similarly, the expression and the expressed are not of real significance : what denotes an extranormal charm to the specimen of literary product is the superb poetic-intuition, which makes an organic-whole by effecting perfect union among the poetical images and ingredients. In order to present a successful painting it becomes incumbent on the part of the painter to have an idea of the different portions of the thing to be presented and there after to have a concept of the whole thing, in which the respective parts are mutually related to each other. The experiencer, who appreciates beauty of the painting does this in a manner similar to that of the painter, since he also first of all comprehends the different parts of whole painting, and thereafter experiences the whole, made up of parts ; and as this experience occurs he necessarily derives supermundane delight. What is true of the painter is true of the literary artist as well ; he is required to have an idea of the different characters, situations and images first of all as distinct from each other, but ultimately this idea leads to knowledge of the whole subject-matter, in which the defferent parts appear as organically related to each other. Subsequently as the poet employs the limited medium of language to give expression to his total and individual experience, the different elements are presented piece-meal naturally : but as the refined connoisseur obtains the experience part by part, the whole image of the theme dawns in his mind, as a result of which he experiences transcendental joy. The greatness of a specimen of the literary art therefore depends on this supreme character of the poetic imagination, which presents a complete and unified picture of the theme to the refined-reader, and thereby enables him to obtain blissful experience. And judging from this standard, the Mahābhārata is capable of being regarded as a specimen of great and good poetry, since Vyāsa is tremendously successful in presenting a full and unified picture of the theme through his conception of characters, treatment of situations and presentation of poetic-images.

The composer of the Mahābhārata is out to present the emotional mood of Quietism ; his mind is concentrated on contemplation of this emotional mood ; and the characters, the situations, the poetic-figures—all these issue spontaneously from the fountain-head of his imagination, giving a perfect and complete shape to the whole Poetry. The lamentation of the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra is an illustration to this point ; it presents profile of all the chief incidents of the Mahābhārata, and thus testifies to the power of the composer to have complete idea of the whole theme at a given point of time. Vyāsa obtains experience of the whole theme of the Mahābhārata at a particular moment, and as he tries to give expression to this experience, the moment itself is transplanted as a result of which eternity is obtained by it. In course of presenting the feelings of his bleeding heart, Dhṛtarāṣṭra refers to the hitting of the mark by Arjuna,—the insult hurled to Draupadī by Duḥśāsana,—the taking of shelter by the Pāṇḍavas in the state of Virāṭa,—the sucking of blood by Duḥśāsana by Bhīma, the sinking of Karṇa's chariot-wheels into the mire and his ultimate slaying by Arjuna, as also to other important incidents. This shows the ability of the poet to arrest in his poetic genius all the important incidents concerning the bloody-battle fought between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas and his dexterity in presenting the incidents in such a way that the connoisseur sees before him a complete and unified picture of the whole theme. This expression of feeling of the sorrowing heart itself is intended to cause experience of the Quietistic in the mind of the experiencer: as his mind shares the feelings of the sorrowing old king, he becomes in a position to realise the transitoriness of the worldly existence, and through that to cultivate aversion to earthly objects. Not only the unfolding of incidents but the depiction of the characters, as well, in the Mahābhārata springs from this fondness of Vyāsa for the Quietistic, which has for its permanent mood—happiness springing from annihilation of all desires.

The dexterily of Vyāsa in presenting the poetical image reveals itself in the paintings of the charming aspect of nature, as also the gruesome; and when the pleasing suits its purpose, Vyāsa introduces it only to be replaced by the gruesome, when occasion demands its incorporation. As the Pāṇḍavas reach the Dvaitavana, they are surprised to see its beauty; and Vyāsa like a neutral observer presents this beauty, without intermingling it with his own feelings. This beauty, thus, is allowed to shine in its own splendour: but Vyāsa draws the image of this beauty in such a manner that the whole universe as a matter of fact is arrested, and the reader gets an opportunity of finding out his kinship with other members of the body of the universe. The Dvaitavana is packed up with Tamāla, palm, mango, kadamba, nīpa and arjuna trees: on the tops of these trees cuckoo, the peacock and the cakora recline singing sweetly ; in the forest move mighty tuskers marked by lines of ichor, and accompanied by their spouses. The forest is studded with abodes of hermits holding matted locks : these hermits are constantly engaged in performance of sacrifices. The Pāṇḍavas headed by Yudhiṣṭhira enter this pleasing grove only to see them received cordially by the denizens of the forests : Yudhiṣṭhira surrounded by his four brothers appear like a massive mountain surrounded by lordly elephants or like a great tree surrounded by clusters of creepers.[11] As the experiencer gets himself acquainted with this picture of the Dvaitavana, he realises the bond existing between the tamāla, the madhūka, the nīpa, the kadamba, the cuckoo, the peacock and the elephants ; and in tne attempt of all these members of this universe to make life as pleasing as possible in the grove he really finds his endeavour to make life as livable as possible. And as this endeavour is traced, he naturally derives delight, since his self-pride, so to say is satisfied by tracing this attempt ; and poetry as a matter of fact is relished, since it satisfies self-pride inherent in the experiencer. Vyāsa thus is supreme in presenting the pleasant : but he knows fully well that man is denied the privilege of experiencing the pleasant for all time to come, since every thing in the universe is transient. So he draws with equal care the image of the gruesome and he is an expert in presenting the picture of the terrible as in drawing the image of the charming.

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[11] Tamālatālāmramadhūkanipakadambasarjārjunakarṇikāraiḥ /
Tapātyaye puṣpadharairupetaṃ mahāvanaṃ rāṣṭrapatirdadarśa //
Mahādrumāṇāṃ śikhareṣu tasthurmanoramāṃ vācamudīrayantaḥ /
Mayūradātyūhacakorasaṅghāstasmin vane barhiṇakokilāśca //
Kareṇuyūthaiḥ saha yūthapānāṃ madotkaṇṭā nāmacalaprabhāṇām /
Mahanti yūthani mahādvipānāṃ tasmin vane rāṣṭrapatirdadarśa //
Latavatānāvanataḥ sa paṇḍavairmahādrumaḥ pañcabhireva dhanvibhiḥ /
Babhau nivāsopagatairmahātmabhirmahāgirir vāraṇayūthapairiva //

—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 24th Chapter, Verses 17-19, 26

Vyāsa always prefers to remain aloof from the content of description : with light touches he presents the sights and sounds of Nature without intermingling his own personality in any way with the subject matter. As the Pāṇḍavas proceed towards the Gandhamādana, a violent hail-storm confronts them on the way, and Vyāsa presents an altogether objective descriptions of the rains without projecting his own personality on the aspect of Nature presented. The gale is terrific : it carries dust in course of its journey so much so that the entire space is covered : eyes do not see : speeches are not heard : large trees crash down on earth giving a loud sound, and the doubt as to whether the skies are falling or the earth is giving way or the mountains are cracking enters into the minds of all persons. The rivers gather in volume being united with waters of torrential shower, and being covered with large spots of foam set out for the ocean carrying large trees it foliage.[12] This description arresting a unique moment in which the earth experiences a torrential thunder-shower is characteristic of Vyāsa, since the personality of the writer is kept completely concealed under the huge mass of description. The poet presents Nature as it is, and not as it seems to him to be, but still the object of description forms the content of Poetry, because the image ultimately enables the refined experiencer to have an idea of the dreadful aspect of the universe. This as a matter of fact, represents one of those very few cases where the matter of fact converges with the truth of Poetry. As the refined-reader gets himself acquainted with this image, he sees before him the entire universe in turmoil ; and perception of this phenomenon not only satisfies his latent urge to experience the dreadful fully, but enables him to tear away his mind also from the worldly existence, charming on account of pleasant things. This ultimately leads to attainment of experience of the Quietistic.

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[12] Cāṇḍavātaṃ mahat vaśaṃ pradurāsīt viśāmpate //
Na sma prajñāyate kiṃcidāvṛte vyomnireṇunā /
Na cāpi śekustat kartumanyoyasyābhibhāṣaṇam //
Na capaśyaṃstato' nyonyaṃ tamasāvṛta cakṣuṣaḥ /
Ākṛṣyamāṇā vātena śaśmacūrṇena bhārata //
Drumāṇām vātabhagnānāṃ patatāṃ bhutale' niśam /
Anyeṣāṃ ca mahījānāṃ śabdaḥ samabhavanmahān //
Dyauḥ svit patati kiṃ bhūmirdīryate parvatonukim /
Iti te menire sarve sarve pavanenāpi mohitāḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 143, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12

But the power of Vyāsa to exhibit the dreadful comes out in flying colours in the portraits of the actual fight as drawn by him. Arjuna appears along with others to resque the cattle of Virāṭa held in ransom by the Kauravas ; he is attacked by all great warriors of Kaurava camp, but the heroism of all these fighters becomes fruitless in confrontation with the valour of this famous archer. Arjuna throws arrows in different directions covering the entire expanse of the earth, so to say, making it impossible for the rival heroes to trace Arjuna standing in the midst of showers of arrows. The shafts discharged by these brave-fighters pierce the armours of the rival heroes, as a result of which loud sounds come out from the golden, silvery and iron armours : this sound is augmented to a considerable extent by the noice of the bow-string engaged in sending streams of arrows. Here Vyāsa describes Arjuna as causing to flow on the surface of the earth a terrible river, having for its water streams of blood and for the moving moss the skulls of the dead. This river it is said is a creation of the law of destruction, since it forebodes the annihilation of the entire creation at the end of the cycles : this river is crowded with raft in the shape of bows and arrows : moss in the shape of the hair of the dead : bank in the shape of the turban and the armour of the departed and isles in the shape of the dead elephant. This river causes consternation in the minds of all person, since it is capable of being crossed with considerable difficulty : crocodiles in the shape of sharp weapons move about in this stream studded with necklace of pearls of the departed and displaying whirlpool by variegated ornaments. Vyāsa describes Arjuna as bringing down on enrth this terrible river enabling the creator to remain unnoticed by the rival heroes.[13] The image of the terrible-battle fought between Arjuna and other rival heroes focuses at a given point the dreadful aspect of the universe, which though appearing as extremely pleasant sometimes wears a terrible look, making it impossible for persons to live in it. Man is destructive by nature, and just as he loves to live, similarly he loves also to destroy. Extention of this logic means that the desire to see the destruction of the universe is inherent in a human being, and this as a matter of fact constitutes a part and parcel of his self-love. The image presented by Vyāsa not only astounds the refined-experiencer by connecting suddenly the battle with the river, but presents the terrible aspect of the universe as well, and thereby satisfies his desire to see the annihilation of the beautiful creation. In the actions of Arjuna, the experiencer finds out his own desire to destroy the worldly existence, and as this is done, an aspect of his self-love is satisfied, as a result of which he experiences poetic-pleasure. This ability of the great poet in presenting image of the terrible manifests itself to a fuller extent in the image of the war-river, as presented in the fourteenth chapter of the Droṇaparva. The Kaurava and the Pāṇḍava armies are engaged in a fierce fight : duel is continuing between the rival heroes ; at this moment the great fighter Droṇa causes an awe-inspiring fierce river to flow, making it impossible for the rival heroes to come out of it. Carrying the image introduced to its logical extreme Vyasa finds in the streams of blood the flow of water,—in the dead horses and elephants the sandy bank,—in the bone and marrow the foam,—in the corpses the floating trees,—in the broken chariot the large tortoise ; in the dead elephant the large island. This river of war is ornamented by various instruments of decoration : it has for the crocodile the discus, and for the green vegetation the hair of the departed..[14] This image also is sparkling with the light of emotional logic ; and by presenting the fight as shining in the light of the awe-inspiring, Vyāsa displays his acceptance of the principle of presenting the poetic-truth, as shining the light of other. The reader thus experiences delight by noticing the innate connection existing between the river and the fight, but a greater enjoyment is derived by him, as he notices the annihilation of the entire universe in the poetic-image. Consequently the urge of the experiencer to destroy the living world is brought into consummation, as a result of which he experiences a particular type of delight. But what is most striking in the image is the proper handling of Vyāsa,—his ability in connecting it with the sentiment of Quietism, the prevalent emotional mood in the work. Profound epic genius of Vyāsa describes the mace and the discus,—the crown and the turban,—the chariot and the elephant,—all emblems of royalty as sinking in the mire of war ; and as the connoisseur experiences the image of this sinking he naturally develops an aversion to worldly objects, as a result of which he ultimately enjoys the experience of the Quietistic. Sometimes humanity is compelled to enter into armed confrontation with others, but this comes as a terrible blow to the right to live happily in perfect peace, that constituted an Absolute value. And in the fight between Relative value and Absolute value, Absolute value always comes out in flying colours. It is the intention of Vyāsa to present the ultimate success of this Absolute value, but before doing that, he feels the necessity of presenting the relative in its proper perspective and this justifies introduction of such an image. Poetic mind of Vyāsa however is concentrated on contemplation of the emotional mood of Quietism and all his images to serve the purpose of bringing the Quietistic into full relief. Profound truth, therefore, exists in the observation of Ānandavardhana that the Mahābhārata is a brilliant specimen of literary art, being ensouled by the emotional mood of Quietism : it is as much a specimen of Kāvya as the Rāmāyaṇa.

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[13] Prāvartayannadīṃ ghorāṃ śoṇitodāṃ taraṅgiṇīm/
Asthiśaivālasambādhāṃ yugānte kālanirmitām//
Śaracāpaplavāṃ ghorāṃ keśaśaivalaśādvalām/
Tanutroṣṇīṣasambādhāṃ nāgakūrmamahadvipām//
Medovasāsṛkpravahāṃ mahābhaya vivardhinīm/
Raudrarūpāṃ mahābhimāṃ svāpadairabhināditām//
Tīkṣṇaśastramahāgrāhāṃ kravyādagaṇasevitām/
Muktāhārormikalilāṃ citrālaṃkārabudbudām//
Śarasaṃghamahāvartāṃ nāganakrāṃ duratyayām/
Mahārathamahādvīpāṃ Śaṃkhadundubhinisvanām//
Cakāra ca tadā pārtho nadīṃ dustaraśoṇitām//
Ādadanasya hi śarān samdhāya ca vimuñcataḥ/
Vikarṣataśca gāṇḍivaṁ na kaścid dadṛśe janaḥ//
—Mahābhārata, Virāṭaparva 62, Verses 17-22.

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[14] Sa vīraḥ satyavān prājño dharmanityaḥ sadāpunaḥ/
Yugāntakālavad ghorāṃ raudrāṃ prāvartayannadīm//
Balaughaiḥ sarvataḥ pūrṇāṃ dhvajavṛkṣāpahāriṇīm//
Śoṇitodāṃ rathāvartāṃ hastyaścakṛtarodhasam/
Kavacodupasamyuktāṃ māṃsapau̇kasamākulām//
Medomajjāsthisikatāmuṣṇīṣacayaphenilām/
Samgrāmajaladāpūrnāṃ prāsamatsyasamākulām//
Naranāgāścakalilāṃ śarave gaughavābinīm/
Śarīradārusaṃghaṭṭāṃ rathakacchapasaṃkulām//
Uttamau̇gaiḥ pau̇kajinīṃ nistriṃśajhaṣasaṃkulām/
Rathanāgahradopetāṃ nānābharaṇabhūṣitām//
Mahārathaśatāvartām bhūmireṇūrmimālinīm/
Mahāvīryavatāṃ samkhye sutarām bhīrudustarām//
Śarīraśatasambādhāṃ gṛdhrakau̇kanisevitām/
Mahārathasahasrāṇi nayantīṃ yamasādanam//
Śulavyālasamākīrṇāṃ prāṇivajiniṣevitām/
Chinnakṣetramahāhaṃsāṃ mukuṭāṇḍajasevitām//
Cakrakurmāṃ gadānakrāṃ śarakṣudrajhaṣākulām/
Bakagṛdhrasṛgālānāṃ ghorasaṃghairniṣevitām//
—Mahābhārata, Droṇaparva, XXIV Verses 8-17,

CHAPTER IV

IMAGERY IN THE RĀMĀYAṆA AND THE MAHĀBHĀRATA—A COMPARATIVE STUDY

I

Suggestiveness in Vālmīki's Image

Sanskrit Poetics conceives of a poet as one in whom the capacity to realise the truth as also the power to give expression to the poetic-truth realised combine ; and judging according to this standard of judgement, Vālmīki is regarded as a poet in the strictest sense of the term. As a matter of fact, Bhaṭṭatouta, one of the learned teachers of Abhinavagupta explains the employment of the term Ādikavi to refer to Vālmīki ; and in course of offering this explanation says that, though from time immemorial the power to realise the truth is present in the seer, still the first specimen of poetic art is born, as soon as the capacity to present an image of the realised truth appears in him : Vālmīki is regarded as the first seer because the competence to present a faithful image of the poetic truth appears in him for the first time. This observation of Bhaṭṭatouta throws sufficient light on the importance of the poetic image in a specimen of poetic art : it also shows the appreciation of Vālmīki's image by the learned exponents of Sanskrit Poetics.

This leads us naturally to an analysis of the representative poetic image in Vālmīki,—image that is regarded as the first of its kind in the domain of literature. When preparations for installing Rāma to the throne of Ayodhyā are complete suddenly Kaikeyī approaches the old king Daśaratha with the request to send Rāma in exile and install Bharata on the throne in his place. The perplexed old king asks Rāma to reject the contention of Kaikeyī and likes to go ahead with arrangements already made for coronation. But Rāma is firm in his stand : he does not like to send his religious-minded father to damnation by effecting a breach in his contract made earlier with Kaikeyî. He says that he has made up his mind to proceed to the forest ; consequently the entire earth is to be offered to Bharata, along with the urban and rural territories and forest tracts. In drawing the image of the perplexed and grief-stricken Daśaratha Vālmîki compares him to the dying sun,—to the blazing fire with its lustres covered by smoke,—to the lake devoid of water ; and the series of standard of comparison introduced go to bring into light the lifeless and dazed state of the perplexed king[1]. The observations of Rāma are equally forceful, being in a position to expression to his firm attitude. In consoling the old weeping father, Rāma says : it does not behove Daśaratha to lament bitterly : an ocean indeed does not experience agitation even though troubled by voluminous currents of flowing streams. It is unnecessary to experience anxiety for Rāma and his associates leaving in exile, because life in the forest, packed up with peace-loving antelopes and echoed by the sweet-notes of different types of birds is really charming and relishable. Rāma as a matter of fact prefers forest life to city life, and by singing hallelujans to the life of nature around man, Vālmīki really testifies to the influence exerted on him by the seers of Vedic poetry, in which Nature plays a very prominent role. Rāma feels that the life close to nature,—to the virgin forest, which he is entering is going to be a profoundly enriching experience more than compensating the amenities of urban life he is leaving behind. Consequently, he implores his weeping father to confer the status of the crown-prince on Bharata and thus to allow him an opportunity of enjoying the amenities of imperial-life. So far as his ownself is concerned, he prefers life close to nature, in which an opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of the rivers, the forests and the trees will be available: this life is sure to give him peace and happiness[2].

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[1] Uparaktamivādityaṃ bhasmacchannamivānalam/
Taṭākmiva nistoyamapaśyajjagatīpatim//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa. 34. 3.

The reason for formation of this attitude is tracable in Rāma's visit to the forest tracts made earlier in the impressionable years of boy-hood. Even when Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were quite young, Viśvāmitra approached king Daśaratha to take the help of Rāma for suppressing the rowdyism of the demons, harassing the life of the ascetics in the forest. Daśaratha readily acceded to the request and Viśvāmitra proceeded to the forest-region in company of the young princes in the impressionable years of their life. Viśvāmitra pointed out to them the infinite beauty of the sylvan landscape,—of the rising moon and the shining star,—of the lateness of night,—of the gliding river and the charming surrounding. The trees are motionless at night, the beasts are silent, the birds and quarters are shrouded in the gloom of night: the sky with stars shining on it looks to peep as it were with eyes: it glitters with myriad points of light. The image of Nature as presented by Viśvāmitra creates a deep impression in the mind of Rāma: and this impression blossoms into a clear perception of new values in the mature years of his life. The nature-poetry of Vālmīki reminds us of the landscape painting done by Vedic-seers, and the picture of the lateness of night as drawn by him seems to be just a replica of the hymn dedicated to the forest nymph as contained in the Ṛgveda[3].

The determination of Rāma to adopt a life close to nature in the forest creates disappointment in the minds of the citizens and the whole city experiences a troubled state, so to say. Stars lose their lustres : constellations do not shine ; the sky becomes covered with dust : the ocean displays agitation being tossed, as it were, by the violent gail foreboding the destruction of the universe. The whole city experiences agony : nobody tries to partake of food : sleep becomes a thing of the past : sighs constantly flow : tears trickle down the cheeks of persons in anguish : all get annoyed with the old and infirm Daśaratha, unable to resist the caprice of the scheming Kaikeyī. The wind does not blow coolly,—the moon does not shine brilliantly,—nor does the sun send hot rays : the husbands, the wives, the brothers and the sons,—all casting aside the thought of their near and dear ones go out in quest of Rāma,—the attraction of all minds. Devoid of the noble-souled crown-prince Rāma, the whole city experiences grief and laments bitterly, as it were, like the entire earth devoid of Indra, the sole custodian of moral order in the universe[4]. The picture of this grief-stricken city as drawn by Vālmīki is unique. The first Seer allows the poetic truth to shine in its own splendour : he does not introduce any external object in order to bring it into full relief ; and the restraint and moderation, as displayed by him make his effort successful in transplanting the painful experiences of the whole city into the mind of the connoisseur. In unembellished and simple language, with light touches Vālmīki draws a plain picture ; but he attains considerable success in communicating the feeling of the grief-stricken citizens to the readers, in whose mind a part of mind of the lamenting people is transplanted so to say, along with the unrivalled moment in which the mind of the grief-stricken people experiences anguish. And a front-ranking poet of the supreme calibre of Vālmīki alone is capable of effecting this magic with his miniature paintings.

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[2] Phalāni mūlāni ca bhakṣayan vane girīṃśca
Paśyan saritaḥ sarāṃsi ca/
Vanaṃ praviśyaiva vicitrapādapaṃ sukhi
bhaviṣyāmi tavāstu nivṛtiḥ//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa XXXIV, 59

[3] Āñjanagandhiṃ surabhiṃ vahvannāmakṛṣivalām/
Prāhaṃ mṛgāṇāṃ mātaramaraṇyānimaśaṃsiṣam//
—Ṛgveda X. 146

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[4] Na vāti pavanaḥ śīto na śaśī soumyadarśanaḥ/
Na suryastapate lokaṃ sarvaṃ paryākulaṃ jagat//
Anarthinaḥ sutāḥ strīṇām bhartāro bhrātarastathā/
Sarve sarvaṃ parityajya rāmamevānvacintayan//
Tatastvayodhyā rahitā mahātmanā puraṃdareṇeva mahī saparvatā/
Cacāla ghoraṃ bhayaśokadīpitā sanāgayodhāśvagaṇā nanāda ca//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa. XXXXI. 18, 19, 21

The departure of Rāma and his party to the forest casts a gloom in the minds of the city-damsels, who experience violent sorrow, hitherto unexperienced. Vālmīki draws a perfect picture of the whole city shedding tears, as it were, in grief through separation with Rāma,—the centre of all eyes. As Rāma finally sets out for the forest, the damsels along with their husbands and sons came back to their respective abodes with their cheeks soiled by flow of tears : the merchants do not exhibit their items for sale in the selling centre : the house-holder do not cook their foods : the mother does not receive her son. As the city damsels lament bitterly the absence of Rāma, the cynosure of all eyes : the Sun, as if in conformity to the gloom of grief prevailing in their hearts sets, giving an opportunity to the dark night to spread itself every where. The city of Ayodhyā appears as if besmeared with darkness with tales and studies suspended in it : with exhibits in its selling centres withdrawn, the city bereft of joy imitates the state of the firmament, that has lost stars from it[5]. This image of the city plunged into unfathomable grief is neither obvious nor far-fetched : it represents a middle path between the two, since Vālmīki not only employs the art of poetic naturalism, nor does heap up poetic figure on poetic figure on : he draws a plain and simple description of the violent sorrow experienced by the citizens, but the simple picture is strong enough to recreate a similar experience in the mind of the connoisseur, who is astounded at the end to find the relationship between the city with its joy suspended and the firmament with its star perished. This Simile is of paramount importance, since it brings into light the idea that, with the exit of Rāma from the city of Ayodhyā, the whole city loses much of its charm and presents a forlorn and sad picture. One who is acquainted with the beauty of the firmament resplendent with shining stars becomes shocked greatly to see the ugliness of the sky with stars dropped from it ; a similar shock is experienced by the citizens who find to their utter dismay the city as devoid of the great personality Rāma. Vālmīki introduces another simile of profound importance in order to bring into light change in the moods of the citizens caused by Rāma's exile. He compares the city to great ocean, with its store of water exhausted, implying thereby that the metropolis presents a highly ugly look as the sea with its great bed devoid of water. The two Similes introduced by Vālmīki, therefore, are in a position to suggest the deplorable state of the city plunged in unfathomable sorrow at the sudden suspension of the coronation ceremony and the departure of Rāma to the forest. The greatness of a poet, as Indian aesthetics maintains, depends on his skill in introducing expressions, contents, metres and figures favourable to attainment of poetic-expression : and judging from this standard Vālmīki is capable of being regarded as a great poet in the strictest sense of the term, since the figures incorporated by him are endowed with profound suggestiveness. As a matter of fact the figures introduced by him form a part and parcel of his poetic texture, and consequently are incapable of being taken out from the body of Poetry. Another feature which deserves attention in the process of incorporation of poetic figures by Vālmīki is that he sees the external world

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[5] Naṣṭajvalanasaṃtāpā praśāntādhyāyasatkathā/
Timireṇānulipteva sā tadā nagarī babhou//
Upaśāntavaṇikpaṇyā naṣṭaharṣā nirāśrayā/
Ayodhā nagari cāsinnaṣṭatāramivāmbaram//
Tadā striyo rāmanimittamāturā yathā sute bhrātari vā vivāsite/
Vilapya dīnā rurudurvicetasaḥ sutairhi tāsāmadhiko'pi so'bhavat//
Praśāntagītotsavanṛtyavādanā vibhraṣṭaharṣā pihitāpaṇodayā/
Tadā hyayodhyā nagarī babhūva sā maharṇavaḥ saṃkṣapitodako yathā//

—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhākāṇḍa XXXXVIII Verses 34-37.

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through the eyes of his characters and persons intended to be described, and employs such external objects as are in a position to bring into expression fully the attitude of the characters and persons. As the citizens of Ayodhyā experience unparalleled sorrow after Rāma's departure from the city, they consider the metropolis as devoid of its former beauty; and in order to present the mood of the citizens Vālmīki appropriately uses the parallelism of the firmament, with shining stars wiped away from it. In a similar manner as all festivity in the city remain suspended and the exhibits in the selling centre are withdrawn, the metropolis wears an ugly look; and in conformity to the object of description Vālmīki rightly introduces the analogy of the ocean, with its bed completely dried up. If the art of Poetry is considered to be an art of employing the limited language for the purpose of transferring experience belonging to one in another, then Vālmīki is surely a great artist for the figures inserted by him are possessed of unlimited suggestiveness, and they become essential means for transplantation of the experience of his characters into the mind of his readers. Indian aesthetics describes the poet as sharing the feelings of the characters and the readers as sharing the feelings of the poet, implying thereby that the common fund of experience is shared equally by the character, the poet and the connoisseur. Possessed of responsive-mind Vālmīki shares the experience of the grief-stricken citizens and through his art of employment of suitable figure and expression he transfers the total experience into the mind of the reader, as a result of which, the connoisseur sees the very city before him and experiences the unparalleled moment of Rāma's leaving the metropolis, in which the residents feel the city as utterly devoid of charm. In this respect the Simile of Vālmīki is a precursor to the Simile of Kālidāsa: this is a proper conveying agent of the emotional mood, and is brought into being by the mood itself in its endeavour to manifest its ownself.

II

Difference in Approach

From the vedic-seer Vālmīki imbibes the art of personifying objects of nature, but what is most remarkable in him is the capacity to project his own-self into the passions and actions of the outer world. The first seer does not drawn a picture of these actions and passions as they are, keeping himself completely natural ; but rather sees then through his eyes ; and as he himself shares the experience of his characters so, to see the outer world through his own eyes tantamounts in his case to its vision through the eyes of his characters. On this point Vyāsa differs widely from Vālmīki : unlike the latter he simply presents a faithful description of the actions and passions of the outer world, without projecting his own-self on them or without intermingling them with the passions of his characters,—the creatures of his muse. After bidding fare-well to Sumanta, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā rich the vicinity of the river ganges ; and employing the device of poetic naturalism, Vālmīki draws a faithful picture of the river Ganges, the bank of which is dotted with prosperous hermitages, and which wears a pleasant look being waited upon by the animals, the birds and the semi-divine beings. The river Ganges is waited upon equally by Gods and demons : it is bedecked with hundreds of celestial groves,—packed up by swans and cakravākas. The poetic imagination of the first seer prompts him to present the gliding river as a lady having for her violent laughter the splash of waters,—having for her charming smiles the foam,—for the braid of hair the whirpool. The banks of this river are packed up with forest elephants : being ornamented at some places by trees rich in foliage and decorated in some places by flowers in full blossom,—ornamented in some parts by the bed of lotus and in others by the bed of lily, the Ganges looks like a passionate lady who has ornamented herself with meticulous care by brilliant embellishments.[6] This parallelism of the passionate girl possesses unlimited possibilities. It gives a startling jolt to the mind of the experiencer, who is astounded, so to say, to find the relation between the passionate lady and the gliding stream. It also gives expression to the profound beauty of the river, which is in a position to stimulate the urge for enjoyment in the human mind in a manner done by the passionate lady. What is of far more importance is that as the sight of the gliding stream stimulates the feeling of love in Rāma, who prefers the forest life to the urban one, he is naturally reminded of the passionate girl ; and Vālmīki, therefore, appropriately introduces her as the standard of comparison. The river is seen through the eyes of Rāma, and necessarily through the eyes of the poet : it therefore, goes to give expression to a particular aspect of the character, through whose eyes it is viewed. Thus while the figure of Vyāsa is intended simply to astound, that of Vālmīki is meant not only to cause astonishment, but to bring out the salient traits of the charaters, as well. And Vālmīki is the poineer in the art of employing the poetic figure in this manner.

True to the characteristic feature of a consciousness, marked by belief, peace and joy, the creation of Vālmīki gives expression to the profound sense of belief and peace of the composer. This is evident from the description of a terrible dream dreamt of by Bharata on the night in which Daśaratha courts death. A messenger has been despatched to bring back Bharata to the Capital : that very night Bharata sees in a dream his father with his bond of hair loosened and falling down from a peak of a mountain to a turbid lake full of cow-dung and moving in that lake, all the while sipping with his folded hands boiling oil mixed with sesame. It seems to him as if the whole ocean has dried up,—the moon has come down to the earth and the entire earth has been engulfed in impenetrable darkness. He also sees his father Daśaratha being drawn by terrible demons all the while laughing and yelling to have a taste of fresh blood.[7] This image of the dream dreamt by Bharata is highly significant, since it brings into light the troubled mental state of the prince, which takes an external form in the shape of the dying up of the ocean or the fall of the moon or the covering up of the universe by unfathomable darkness. This technique of presenting the psychology of the characters in an external form and focusing their inclinations and state of mind at a given point of consciousness of the refined-reader is introduced for the first time in the field of Poetry by Vālmīki ; and at this point he makes a definite advance on the seers of the Vedas who though personifying Nature are unable to project the mental states of the characters outside in the external form the outer nature. This techique is adopted by Kālidāsa who gives fuller form to it and achieves considerable success in giving external form to thoughts of the internal mind. This characteristic feature is conspicuous by its absence in the Mahābhārata. ; and Vyāsa like a neutral observer more or less records faithfully the passions and actions of the outer world as also the feelings experienced by a troubled mind : he does not try to present his external nature as an embodiment of the moods experienced by his characters, nor does he try to present the moods of his characters as being influenced by his external nature. Like a cold-blooded logician he proceeds to draw an image to its logical extreme superimposing the identity of different elements of the standard of comparison on the elements associated with the object of description. Like a historian also he unfolds series of incidents, without intermingling his own personality with the stream of narrative, and thereby allowing the objective-truth to shine in its own light. Vyāsa does not see the nature with the eyes of his characters nor does he present the external object as the outward manifestation of the mood and feelings of his poetic mind or the minds of characters created by his muse. This method is followed by Vyāsa, since the Mahābhārata is not simply a specimen of poetic art; but rather a treatise on philosophy, religion, ethics, politics and morality as well: and consequently the author is not free to neglect the objective altogether. In the Mahābhārata Vyāsa passes freely from the land of Poetry to the land of Philosophy,—from the land of morality to the land of politics. As a matter of fact at the time of Vyāsa, Poetry did not originate as a separate branch, its line of demarcation with politics and ethics remained very thin: and thus enabled the poet to play the role of a philosopher, a politician, a religious preacher and an expert on morality as well. And a politician or an expert on morality or religion has to place simply the facts before the readers having no liberty to interpret them according to his own inclinations. These handicaps with which Vyāsa starts prevents him to project his own personality into the moods and playfulness of the external nature; and as a result of this what we find in an objective approach, instead of a subjective one as tracable in the Vedic-seers and Vālmīki.

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[6] Jalāghātāṭṭahāsogrāṃ phenanirmalahāsinīm/
Kvacidveṇīkṛtajalāṃ kvacidāvataśobhitām//
Kvacitstimitagambhīrāṃ kvacidvegasamākulām/
Kvacitgambhīranirghoṣāṃ kvacidbhairavaniḥsvanām//
Devarājopavāhyaśca saṃnāditavanāntarām/
Pramadāmiva yatnena bhūṣitām bhuṣaṇottamaiḥ//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, xxxxx, 16, 17, 23

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[7] Śvapne pitaramadrākṣaṃ malinaṃ muktamūrdhajam/
Patantamadriśikharātkaluṣe gomayehrade//
Plavamānaśca me dṛṣṭaḥ sa tasmin gomayehrade/
Pibannañjalinā tailaṃ hasanniva muhurmuhuḥ//
Tatastilodanaṃ bhuktvā punaḥ punaradhaḥśirāḥ/
Tailenābhyaktasarvāṅgastailamevāvagāhata//
Svapne'pi sāgaraṃ śuṣkaṃ candraṃ ca patitaṃbhuvi/
Uparuddhaṃ ca jagatīm tamaseva samāvṛtām//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa 69th Chapter Verses 8-11

Rāma, the chief personage of Vālmīki develops a tolerant attitude: he knows fully well that inscrutable are the ways of destiny,—that all union is bound to end in separation,–all prosperity in misery,—all treasure in poverty,—and all life in death. This outlook on life makes it easy for him to tender advice to Bharata to return to the city of Ayodhyā and get installed to the throne of the state. So far as he is concerned, he is entering the forest tracts of Daṇḍaka with satisfaction, because living in the vicinity of nature he is likely to become richer in experience than that in the city ; and this life has advantages which can amply compensate the amenities of urban life.[8] Yudhiṣṭhira, the chief personage of Vyāsa exhibits a similar outlook : when he finds himself installed on the throne of Hastināpura his heart bleeds for the millions of his dead relations, and he drage his unwilling legs to the throne, experiencing all the time a sense of profound grief for the vanquished. Then again after the death of Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira realises the potency of the law of Mahākāla which is out to cause destruction to the entire universe and which when unleashed, puts an end to the chief architect of annihilation, as well, who lets loose the forces of destruction through his own machinations. Hearing the death of Kṛṣṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira becomes conscious of the powers of Mahākāla. and then Vyāsa tenders advice to the Pāṇḍavas not to be disturbed by the sudden death of Kṛṣṇa representing the very spirit of the Epic, because the universe depends on Kāla for its existence, and ultimately it is withdrawn again by this Kāla, representing the law of the universe. Thinking that the law of the universe is incapable of being contradicted or counter acted, Yudhiṣṭhira along with his brothers and Droupadī set out on their enternal journey, and on the way all the brothers except Yudhiṣṭhira along with Droupadī drop down, making the sole survivor Yudhiṣṭhira conscious of the powers of destiny and the eternal law of the Mahākāla. But though the approach of Rāma is in agreement with that of Yudhiṣṭhira, the approach of the former is much more aesthetic in character than that of the latter, who takes a note of things in a more or less dispassionate manner in cold blood. When Rāma gives expression to the inscutability of the ways of destiny, he introduces standards to bring into full relief the real nature of his realised truth : just as travellers meet and depart on the road, similarly persons get united and finally become separated in the world ; this union resulting in ultimate separation is comparable to the union between two logs of wood, drifted by the current of the streams.[9] Rāma finds out very beautifully his connection with the universe at large, and the relation which the plant-world bears to the animal-world becomes perfectly clear to him. But Yudhiṣṭhira in such cases simply presents his realised truths without trying to impress on the reader the beauty of the truth seen, which charms the reader not so much by its beauty as by its universal character and profoundity. The reason behind this difference in approach between Vālmīki and Vyāsa is again accountable to the fact that while the Rāmāyaṇa is an out and out poetic creation, the Mahābhārata is a compendium of literature, philosophy, religion, ethics and morality.

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[8] Tvaṃ rājā bharata bhava svayaṃ narāṇāṃ vanyānāmahamapi
rājarāṇmṛgāṇām/
Gaccha tvaṃ puravaramadya samprahṛṣṭaḥ saṃhṛṣṭastvahamapi
daṇḍakān pravekṣye//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, 107th Chapter, Verse 17

III

Battle-scene in the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata

The aesthetic approach of Vālmīki is evident from the image drawn by him of the fight between Rāma and Kumbhakarṇa which offers a sharp contrast to that of the fight between Aśvatthaman and Ghaṭotkaca, as presented by Vyāsa. As Kumbhakarṇa is aroused from his slumber and the invasion of Lamkā is reported to him, he becomes extremely agitated and challenges Rāma by saying that he is neither Virādha nor Kavandha nor Khara nor Vāli nor Mārīca to be slain at ease by the sons of the Raghus : he is Kumbhakarṇa and is sure to devour Rāma after testing his energy and strength. Hearing boastings of Kumbhakarṇa Rāma discharges his shafts resembling the adament in strength, but even those adamantine shafts fail to inflict any injury what so ever in the limbs of Kumbhakarṇa : with a movement of his mace the great demon starts to repel the shower of arrows, and drinks, as it were, the shafts that fall on his limbs like drops of rain. Then Rāma discharges the arrow obtained through the favour of the wind-god : these arrows strike an arm of the demon, which is chopped off from his body ; but the enemy to the gods starts march against Rāma by drawing out a large tree with the help of his single arm. Here with his profound poetic-intuition Vālmīki compares Kumbhakarṇa bereft of one arm to a mighty mountain, with its wings clipped off by the thunder-bolt of Indra ; and extending the parallelism finds out the similarity of the single arm with which Kumbhakarṇa carries the mighty tree to the extended-hood of the serpent-king. Then Rāma throws again another weapon against the demon : this missile strikes the demon at his feet, as a result of which he loses both of them ; but proceeds handless and feetless to devour Rāma with his extended mouth. Kumbhakarṇa trying to devour Rāma is compared appropriately to the demon Rāhu, attempting to swallow the moon in the firmament, and by bringing into relation suddenly the devouring demon Kumbhakarṇa and the swallowing Rāhu Vālmīki abruptly brings into relation the animal world and the world of nature, bringing into light through implication the idea that in the universe all are mutually related to one another. As Kumbhakarṇa rushes forward to devour Rāma, the great fighter hurls the unfailing arrow shining like the glowing sun and the blazing fire and comparable in velocity to the thunder-bolt of Indra at the demon, who is struck in his head, only to loose it forever. With the velocity of this sharp missile Rāma succeeds in cutting the head of Kumbhakarṇa like Indra the head of Vṛtta and in drawing a picture of this death of Kumbhakarṇa at the hands of Rāma, Vālmīki introduces a nice Simile, which is in a position to bring into light the utter futility of the prowess of Kumbhakarṇa in open confrontation with Rāma. The head of the mighty demon, ornamented by ear-rings, Vālmīki says, appears like the moon rendered lustreless at night owing to the sudden appearance of the sun in the firmament.[10] The moon shines brilliantly at the night, but when the sun appears it loses its charm completely and descends on the peak of the setting-mount, as if, to keep itself away from the inquisitive eyes of the experiencers. The head of Kumbhakarṇa was so long shining in its own splendour, which was enhanced all the more by the ear-rings. As the arrow of Rāma sends it down to earth it suddenly loses its charm and becomes aptly comparable to the pale-moon, with its rays transferred to the sun. The simile therefore, brings into full relief the end of all pleasing actions of Kumbhakarṇa, which so long captivated the minds of all concerned : it presents at a given point of consciousness the end of a historic personality, who is forced to withdraw all his actions suddenly. As the separated head of Kumbhakarṇa reaches the earth and the demon courts death, the earth along with the mountains start to tremble and the Gods start to pronounce Victory to the great vanquisher Rāma. Here again Vālmīki introduces another Simile ; and the Simile is of profound importance. Putting an end to the life of Kumbhakarṇa, Rāma shines in the company of the monkey-army just as the sun shines when freed from the clutches of Rāhu in its attempt to put an end to the darkness enveloping the entire world. The sun does not stand in need of any other luminosity in order to dispel the darkness of the world : it shines in its own splendour and covers the entire universe with the flood of light ; similarly Rāma does not stand in need of other warrior in order to annihilate the demons : he alone is in a position to put an end to even the most mighty of the Rākṣasas, and thereby to fill the minds of all with profound delight.[11] The pale moon shining by the side of the blazing sun offers a sharp contrast to the shining solar-orb ; and the falling Kumbhakarṇa also offers a sharp contrast to the victor Rāma shining in his undimmed glory. These two Similes introduced by Vālmīki give expression to the relation of the vanquished and the vanquisher existing between Kumbhakarṇa and Rāma ; but it extends a sober influence as well on the refined-readers, who take note of the fact that just as it is natural for the moon to die down at sun-rise, similarly it is only natural for Kumbhakarṇa to court death at the victory-march of Rāma. The natural character of defeat is impressed on the refined-reader, who once more realises the inscutability of the ways of destiny and learns to accept life as it is presented to him. Thus by introducing Similes here and there,—by trying to cause astonishment in the mind of reader with the splendid description of the charge of Kumbhakarṇa,—by enumerating the effects which result from the death of Kumbhakarṇa,—and finally by tracing the similitude of the victor Rāma to the blazing sun—the dispeller of darkness, Vālmīki creates such a charming atmosphere, that the shadow of destruction is not experienced as looming large over the field of battle : and the mood of fear or heroism is not so much stimulated on the experiencer, as is stimulated the craving for experiencing the beautiful. The refined-reader in his attempt to appreciate this image finds to his astonishment that his craving for enjoying beauty is brought into consummation by the image : and that is why he becomes attracted to it.

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[9] Yathā kāṣṭhaṃ ca kāṣṭaṃ ca sameyātāṃ mahārṇave/
Sametya ca vyapeyātāṃ kālamāsādya kañcan//
Evaṃ bháryāśca putrāśca jñatayaśca dhanānica/
Sametya vyavadhāvanti dhruvo hyeṣāṃ vinā bhavḥ//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Chapter 115, Verses 26-27.

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[10] Te kumbhakarṇasya tadā śarire vajropamāna vyathayāṃbabhūvuḥ/

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Sa tanmahāparvatkuṭasaṃnibhaṃ
Nivṛtta draṃṣṭraṃ calacārukuṇḍalam/
Cakarta rakṣo' dhipateḥ śirastathā
Yathaiva vṛtrasya purā purandaraḥ//
Kumbhakarṇaśiro bhāti kuṇḍalālaṃkṛtaṃ mahat/
Āditye' bhyudite rātrau madhyastha eva candramāḥ//

—Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddhakāṇḍa, 67th Chapter

Verses 165, 181, 182.

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[11] Sa devalokasya tamo nihatya
Sūryo yathā rāhumukhādvimuktaḥ/
Tathā vyabhāsīdbhuvi vānaraughe
Nihatya rāmo yudhi kumbhakarṇam//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddhakāṇḍa. 67th Chapter, Verse 189

Vyāsa draws a completely different image of the fierce-fight between the warriors of the Kouravas and the Pāṇḍavas, and when introduced to his images the reader breaths, so to say, in the atmosphere of terror and cruelty. That aesthetic approach which is a characteristic feature of Vālmīki's compositions is conspicuous by its absence in the creations of Vyāṣa, who tries to present the portrait of a war-like image. Vyāsa's image seem to present themselves as true copies of the real, while those of Vālmīki appears to be as entirely new creations, astounding the refined-appreciator by the provocation power of the poet's imagination, that aims at resurrection of the past. Thus in describing the fight between Aśvatthaman and Ghaṭotkaca, Vyāsa simply brings into light the terror let loose and the havoc created by both the fighters, who lead the annihilation of a vast army comprised of infantry, cavalry and the chariot-soldiers. Being struck by missiles, of terrific velocity, the elephants dropdown on earth causing the apprehension of taking of mountain-peaks : millions of dead corpses cover the earth and the trunks of these dead elephants look like so many dead serpents.[12] This Simile bringing into relation the trunk of the dead elephant and the still body of the serpent falls flat on the refined-reader, since it is neither brought into being by the exuberance of the poet's emotion nor does it go to stimulate any mood lying latent in the form of an impression nor does it go to satisfy any craving inherent in human mind. It is introduced mechanically; and goes only to present a terrible picture of the battle-field strewn with millions of dead elephants. But it is to be considered as to whether it succeeds in serving that purpose also for which it is introduced. A Simile is neither to be too obvious nor to be too far-fetched: the obvious does not cause astonishment, and consequently does not contribute in any way to steadiness of the mind: the far-fetched in a similar manner taxes to a considerable extent the critical intellect of the reader, making his aesthetic-instinct docile. The image introduced by the Simile presenting the parallelism of the mutilated trunks of elephants to the motionless bodies of serpents represents the obvious: it fails to astound to experiencer, as a result of which it does not lead to suspension of ordinary thought concerning small joy and sorrow, petty gain and loss in the mind of the experiencer. An example of the far-fetched is furnished in the next section, where Vyāsa draws the image of the river in the shape of the fierce battle, brought down by Aśvatthaman. The brave son of Droṇa in order to wreck vengeance on the murderer of his father, causes a fierce river to flow in the field of battle: this river Vyāsa says is full of frogs in the shape of banners of different units of army: herein the tortoise is represented by the mighty drum giving a clarion call to take part in the battle: the swans are represented similarly by the royal umbrellas,—the chowries by the foam, —the terrible crocodile by the vulture,—the slabs of stone by the motionless elephants,—the sharks by the sharp and pointed missiles,—the dolphins by the dead horses,—the embankment by the sinking chariots and the floating trees by the staffs of banners. This river of fight, Vyāsa continues is packed up with mire in the shape of flesh and marrow of the million dead : separated heads herein assume the shape of floating rafts : presenting a terrible look the river full to the brim by stream of flood forebodes destruction to the entire creation.[13] The poetic figure metaphor once introduced is drawn to its logical extreme in the piece and taking a flight of fancy, Vyāsa brings into relation forcibly, so to say, entities, that are far removed from one other. The moving banner of the units of the army thus has no similarity with the plodding frog nor has the royal umbrella any similarity with the swimming swan : the poet takes note of the movement of both banner and the frog and the whiteness of both the royal umbrella and the swimming swan, and brings the two into relation. But the effect that is produced by the metaphor is not in the least good and great. It causes astonishment in the mind of reader no doubt, but not so much by the profoundity of feeling of the poet, as by his skill in improvisation of the metaphor. The extremely far-fetched poetic figure is intended possibly to cause awe and consternation in the mind of the refined-reader, but the effect that is produced by it is yet to be judged, since it taxes to a tremendous extent the power of understanding of the experiencer, making it difficult for him to share the feelings of fighters and through them those of the frightened humanity at large. And this is so, because the aim of Vyāsa is not simply to compose a specimen of embellished poetry, but to present in a single volume, a treatises on philosophy, ethics and morality as well. Moreover the predominent emotional mood in the Mahābhārata is the Quietistic, one of the excitent factors of which is represented by discrimination between the permanent and the transient in the world : and Vyāsa possibly thinks that the image of this fierce battle is likely to convince the experiencer of the transitory character of the world and thereafter to cause annihilation of all desires in him, enabling him to have flavour of the mood of Quietism. This purpose of Vyāsa, however, is not fulfilled by the image presented, since without making the reader savour the bliss of Quietism, it goes rather to stimulate wonder in him and appreciate the fancy of the poet, which behaves in a very irresponsible manner, presenting thus the far-fetched. Vālmīki does not allow his fancy to behave in such an irresponsible manner. At the outset he speaks of a perfect collaboration between critical intellect and intensity of feeling : and in the actual war itself he translates this ideal of callaboration into practice. It is because of this that inspite of a number of poets flourishing before Vālmīki, he alone is regarded as the Ādikavi,—the:first creator of a specimen of ornate Poetry.

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[12] Śarīraiḥ śastranirbhinnaiḥ samāstoiryata medinī/
Viśabdairalpaśabdaiśca śoṇitaughapariplutaiḥ//
—Mahābhārata, Bhiṣmavadhaparva, 96th Chapter
Verse 59.

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[13] Śoṇitodāṃ rathāvartāṃ hastyaśvakṛtarodhasam/
Kavacodpalasaṃyuktāṃ māṃsapaṅkasamākulām//
Medomajjāsthisikatā muṣṇiṣacayaphenilām/
Saṃgrāmajaladāpūrṇāṃ prāsamatsyasamākulāṃ//
Naranāgāśvakalilāṃ śaravegoughavāhinīm/
Śarıradārusaṃghaṭṭāṃ rathakacchapasaṃkulām//
Uttamaṅgaiḥ paṅkajinīṃ nistriṃśajhaṣasaṃkulām/
Rathanāgohradopetāṃ nānābharaṇabhūṣitām//
Mahārathasatāvartāṃ bhūmireṇūrmimālinim/
Mahāvīryavatāṃ samkhye sutarāṃ bhīrudustarām//
Śarıraśatasambādhāṃ gṛdhrakaṅkaniṣevitām/
Mahārathasahasrāṇi nayantīṃ yamasādanam//
Śūlavyālasamākīrṇāṃ prāṇivājiniṣevitām//
Chinnakṣatramahāhaṃsāṃ mukuṭāṇḍajasevitām//
Cakrakūrmāṃ gadānakrāṃ sarakṣudrajhaṣākulām/
Bakagṛdhraśṛgālānāṃ ghorasaṃghairniṣevitām//
—Mahābhārata, Droṇaparva, 14th Chapter Verses 10-17

IV

Disagreement in Nature-painting

The difference between the poetic excellences of Vālmīki and Vyāsa makes itself felt in a more pronounced manner in the descriptions of nature, as drawn by the two poets. Vālmīkl inherits the rich nature philosophy of the Vedic-seers, and that vitality and fullness which characterise the hymns of the ṚgVeda appear in more full-bodied forms in the Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki acquires a new technique of connecting nature with the psychology of his characters, and presents them at times after seeing them through their eyes. As a matter of fact, some nature poems contained in the Rāmāyaṇa produce a lyric-effect by presenting the passions of the characters, and through them the passions of the poet. In some cases the poet records the beauty manifested in the sights and sounds of nature, along with the change produced by them in the animal world, connecting thereby the animal world and the plant world as a whole, and allowing thus an opportunity to the readers to experience connection between the animate and the inanimate, both of which are members in the body of the universe. Plain and simple descriptions of nature, presenting the charm of the rising sun or the shining star or the splendid moon or the round ocean or the blue sky cause delight to the refined-reader, because it satisfies the desire latent in him to savour the beauty of things, which are strewn around him in the world of nature. This desire burning forever in his mind does not get itself satisfied as he moves about in the empirical plane : this is satisfied, when he gets himself acquainted with the nature-paintings, as a result of which the plain and simple truth also gives him supernormal delight. The image of the rainy season as presented by Vālmīki furnishes a brilliant illustration to this point.

As Rāma reaches the mountain Mālyavat, the rainy season approaches, giving the blue sky the look of a wound by flashes of lightning. Being touched by the first drops of rain, the parched earth emits vapour, reminding Rāma of Sītā shedding tears ; the streak of lightning giving out feeble light in the dark cloud looks like the slender Sītā struggling in the hold of Rāvaṇa. Dust settles down : breeze surcharged with water-sprays starts to blow, making the heat of the severe summer cool : the kings suspend their victorious march : the swan along with its spouse experiences longing for the Mānasa. The sky in which the host of clouds starts to move becomes visible at one point and invisible at another, displaying all along the beauty of still ocean, packed up by mountains underneath at some points. Fresh waters, being mixed up with the lustre of different minerals flow down the slopes of the mountain, causing thus the mountain rivulet, to flow being welcomed by the peacock, as also by aquatic birds.[14]

But this plain truth is not presented for all time to come. Vālmīki realises that a balance should be established between the technique of presenting the plain truth and that of introducing the truth, as shining in the light of others. It is for this reason that this nature painting includes a nember of metaphorical images, in which the clouds appear as wild-tuskers,—the row of cranes appear as the garland,—and the earth rich in vegetation gives the look of a pleasing lady. Continuing his description of the rainy season therefore, Vālmīki abruptly finds out the similarity of the roaring cloud with the fighting elephant and says: with the banner of lightning unfolded,—the garland of the cranes displayed, the clouds roar as violently as the tusker taking part in the hilarious march of the kings. The cranes, being desirous of tasting the first rain drops soar high in the firmament, and in the process of their movement appears as a brilliant garland placed round the neck of the sky. Earth, covered with fresh vegetation and carrying insects of variegated colours looks like a charming damsel, exhibiting a number of ornaments.[15] Vālmīki suspends this metaphorical image here, and goes back again to the technique of leaving the truth alone to shine in its own splendour. He says: sleep approaches the vicinity of the eyes,—the river the vicinity of the cloud, and the passionate girl the vicinity of the lover. Peacocks start to dance in the outskirts of the forest,—Kadambas appear in full blossom—the cow experiences longing for the bull, and the brilliant earth experiencs equal amount of longing for crop. The elephants enjoy,—so do the cows,—the deer takes rest in the forest,—the mountain presents a charming spectacle,—the kings do not proceed on their victorious march,—Indra starts to play with the showers.[16] This simple and unornamented image of the poetic truth, Vālmīki thinks, is more powerful in stimulating the inherent feeling in the mind of the connoisseur, since the beautiful is characteristed with an inherent capacity of calling into play the latent impression. This consideration prompts the first seer to introduce the simple truth so profusely; and by doing it he achieves remarkable success, since the image convinces the reader of the capacity of beauty to call into play latent impressions, and thereby to cause delight by satisfying his self-pride to a considerable extent.

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[14] Rajaḥ praśāntaṃ sahiṃo’ dya vāyurnidāghadoṣa—prasarāḥ praśāntāḥ /
Sthitā hi yātrā vasudhādhipānāṃ pravāsino yānti narāḥ svadeśān //
Saṃprasthitā mānasavāsalubdhāḥ priyānvitāḥ saṃprati cakravākāḥ /
Abhikṣṇavarṣodakavikṣateṣu yānānimārgeṣu na saṃpatanti //
Kvacitprakāśaṃ kvacidaprakāśaṃ nabhaḥ prakīrṇāmbudharaṃ vibhāti /
Kvacitkvacitparvatasaṃniruddhaṃ rūpaṃ yathā Śāntamahārṇavasya //
—Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, 28th Chapter Verses 15—17

Self-pride, it is a fact, is satisfied in some cases to see the plain and simple truth, shining its own splendour, but sometimes it gets more satisfied to see the poetic truth, as shining in the light of a new thing, because when the poet brings two disconnected into connection, the reader once again becomes conscious of his inherent oneness with the universe as a whole. And as this feeling dawns in him, he realises him to be great, bearing relation to the universe as a whole, as a result of which his self-pride is brought into consummation. This consideration prompts Vālmīki to change his technique of presenting the truth in the image of Autumn which appears in quick succession to that of the implacable summer. The autumnal night displaying the charming face represented by the moon, holding the eyes of shining stars,—and decked in the garment of moon-light appears like a damsel, covering her entire frame in white robes. The water of the lake with a single swan reclining on it and full of blowing lilies appear to imitate the beauty of sky free from clouds, studded stars and holding brilliantly the shining moon. The gait of the rivers, having girdles represented by row of fishes shows down like that of the ladies, experiencing amorous toying with their lovers: the mouths of the rivers ornamented by the Cakravāka and packed up by the Kāśa flowers in full blossom present a charming sight of faces of ladies, shining in leafy decoration.[17] This image of the Autumn produces an outstanding lyric effect, because the Autumn is not presented as it is, but rather as it seems to Vālmīki to be : and when the reader gets himself acquainted with it he experiences the moods and passions of the poet, that prompt him to see Autumn in this manner : and it becomes a pleasant surprise to him to find out his own moods and passions in the feelings of the Ādikavi. This image therefore, allows an opportunity to the reader to trace his own cravings and moods, and through that act of tracing to satisfy his self-pride, that burns for all time to come in the human heart.

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[15] Vidyutpatākāḥ sabalākamālāḥ śailendrakuṭākṛtisaṃnikāśāḥ /
Garjanti meghāḥ samudīrṇanādā mattāgajendrā iav saṃyugasthāḥ //
—Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, 28th Chapter Verse—20.

[16] Nidrā śanaiḥ keśavamabhyupaiti drutaṃ nadī sāgaramabhyupaiti /
Hṛṣṭā balākā ghanamabhyupaiti kāntā sakāmā priyamabhyupaiti //
Jātā vanāntāḥ śikhisupranṛttā jātāḥ kadambāḥ sakadambaśākhāḥ /
Jātā vṛṣā goṣu samānakāmā jātā mahī sasyavanābhirāmā //
—Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkhindhākāṇḍa, 28th Chapter, Verses 25—26.

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[17] Rātriḥ śaśāṅkoditasoumyavaktrā tārāgaṇonmīlitacārunetrā/
Jyotsnāṃśukaprā varaṇā vibhāti nārīva śuklāṃśukasaṃvṛtāṅgī//
Mīnopasamdarśitamekhalānāṃ nadīvadhūnāṃ gatayo'dya mandāḥ/
Kāntopabhuktālasagāminīnāṃ prabhātakāleṣviva kāminīnām//
—Rāmāyāṇa, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa 30th Chapter, Verses 47 & 55.

Vyāsa however does not follow the same technique as adopted by Vālmīki. He neither sees nature through the eyes of his characters nor does intermingle his own passions and actions with the sights and sounds of external nature. He simply views the whole thing as a neutral observer, and that stoic neutrality, which is traced in the drama makes itself felt in his nature-paintings, as well. As the Pāṇḍavas reach the Dvaita-forest, Vyāsa gets an opportunity of describing the animal and the plant world, associated with it : but he does not utilise this in order to call into play a latent impression in the mind of his reader nor does he try to satisfy the craving for finding out kinship with the universe as a whole, as a result of which his truth lacks in the brilliance of the poetic truth : it comes near the truth of fact, recorded by the historian or near the truth of science, recorded by the cold-blooded scientist. Vyāsa thus gives a long list of the trees found in the Dvaita-forest, as also of the birds making their habitations in the forest, without trying to relate the long list to the passions of his mind or to the moods and feelings of readers. The Dvaitavana thus is seen by Yudhiṣṭhira at the end of the implacable summer as one packed by the tamāl, the tāla, the madhūka, the nīpa, the kadamba, the sarjja, the arjuna, the karṇikāra and the āmra trees : the tops of these trees are full of a number of birds like the peacock, the cuckoo, the quail and others. The forest is inhabited equally by rutting tuskers enjoying the company of she-elephants. Vyāsa describes Yudhiṣṭhira residing in this atmosphere of the forest in company of his brothers as resembling a lofty mountain surrounded by herds of tusker. This Simile is as cold as the nature-painting, since it simply convinces the reader of the royal personality of Yudhiṣṭhira, presence of which makes him imitate the great mountain : but it falls flat on the connoisseur, who is not able to trace his own connection with the imperial personality.[18] The image also is not successful in stimulating the latent impression in him, because the description is brought into being not by the feeling of the poet, but rather by his critical intellect. The aim of Vyāsa does not lie in stimulating the passion latent in the human mind: he does not try to work on emotions and moods: following the out and dried manner of the historian and the logician, he dispassionately unfolds facts, as a result of which the reader simply derives knowledge, and does not experience supurmundane delight. Judging from this standpoint, the poetry of Vyāsa does not fulfill the requirements of great poetry, since while the ordinary leads to simple comprehension, the great leads to supermundance delight. The reason for Vyāsa's poetry being relegated to the status of the ordinary is not far to seek: it is because the Mahābhārata, is not a pure specimen of literary art: it is a compendium of poetry and religion, ethics and morality in a single volume. And where Vyāsa fails, Vālmīki succeeds, because the Rāmāyaṇa is a specimen of poetic art all through, as a result of which the images drawn in it are creations of the poet's exuberance of emotion.

The difference in approach between Vyāsa and Vālmīki, and also the difference in technique between the two appear in a more pronounced manner in the image of moon-rise, as drawn respectively in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. When Hanumān reaches the city of Laṅkā, the moon rises in the firmament enabling him to have a look at the spouse of

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[18] Tamālatālāmramadhūkanīpakadambasarjārjunakarṇikāraiḥ/
Tapātyaye puṣpadharairupetaṃ mahāvanaṃ rāṣṭrapatirdadarśa//
Mahādrumāṇāṃśikhareṣu tasthurmanoramāṃ vācamudirayantaḥ/
Mayūradātyūhacakorasaṅghāstasmin vane barhiṇakokilāśca//
Kareṇuyūthaiḥ saha yūthapānāṃ madotkanṭā nāmacalaprabhāṇām
Mahanti yūthani mahādvipānāṃtasmin vane rāṣṭrapatirdadarśa//
Latavatānāvanataḥ sa paṇḍavairmahādrumaḥ pañcabhireva dhanivibhiḥ/
Babhou nivāsopagatairmahātmabhirmahāgirirvāraṇayūthapairiva//
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 24th Chapter Verses 17-19, 26.

Rāma, resembling the thin line of the moon's delight,—the feeble mark made by gold on the touch-stone,—and the faint line of cloud, torn by the speed of the wind. As the moon rises, denoting fresh beauty to the entire creation, comprised of the movable and the immovable, it causes a change in the animal and the plant world, as a whole, as a result of which the ladies of the scraglio of Rāvaṇa experience profound joy; and seeing the rising moon through the eyes of these damsels, Vālmīki presents a plethora of Similes, creating thus the poetic figure which goes by the of name of the Mālopamā.[19] The moon rises putting an end to the darkness of the universe and giving a charming look to the entire creation, and as it rises the ocean experiences a tremor. The orb of the moon looks like the swan encaged in the silver cage: as it leaps into the skies it imitates the beauty of the lion standing on the peak of the Mandara mountain and the brave fighter seated on the lordly tusker. The moon carrying the dark spot and with its orb shining in full splendour, Vyāsa continues, appears as the bull bearing a pointed horn or like a white mountain holding a lofty peak or like the elephant carrying a horn made of gold. The moon shines in undimmed glory in the firmament just as the lion shines standing on a slab of stone or as the princely tusker shines in the fierce battle-field or as the imperial monarch shines being placed on the throne of a large state. The Similes introduced by Vālmīki deserve careful consideration. He not only relates the shining moon to the swan, the lion and the elephant, but to the imperial monarch, as well, and thus gives a display of his skill in presenting the universe as a unified whole, in which the different entities bear close relationship to one other. The swan placed in a silver cage presents a charming spectacle : the lion standing on the peak of a mountain presents a majestic look : the imperial monarch placed on the throne wears a stately grandeur as well, as it leaps into the firmament. This helps Vālmīki to describe the changes experienced by the ladies at the moon rise,—an experience which is usually obtained by them at the sight of the marching crown-prince or a brave-fighter returning on a triumphant journey to his capital. Vālmīki thus not only sees the shining moon through the eyes of the ladies, and thus presents a poetic truth, which is comprised of the similarity between the swan, the lion, the fighter, the elephant, the king on the one hand and the moon on the other : but at the same time he draws the image, put forward by the Simile in such a manner that it becomes conducive to attainment of poetic experience, since it puts the reader in a appropriate frame of mind, and thus paves the path for the emergence of emotional moods delineated in the subsequent section. This image of the moon-rise serves another purpose also. Vālmīki, possessed of a poetic intuition thinks that the tragedy of Sītā's life is capable of being brought into full relief by placing it on the back-ground of the charming aspect of nature : and consequently he introduces the charm donated to the entire universe by the brilliant moon shining in the grip of the firmament. When grief is presented in the background of joy, it becomes all the more poignant : and Vālmīki makes full utilisation of this technique of depicting of sorrow in the background of joy and beauty. Being acquainted with the image of the splendidly shining lunar orb, the reader gets an opportunity of satisfying his craving for experiencing beauty, as also his desire to trace the connection of his ownself with the entire creation to which new charm is donated by the moon : but soon as he finds Sītā lamenting alone in the grove, resembling the thin digit of the moon and the attenuated mark on the touch-stone, he becomes conscious of the profoundity of grief experienced by the spouse of Rāma, who looks like an embodiment of sorrow. This enables the connoisseur to find out his own sorrows and frustrations in the experiences of that embodiment of grief : his self-love is satisfied to some extent, as a result of which his expanded ego savours its own self, giving him supermundane delight.

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[19] Haṃso yathā rājatapañjarasthaḥ siṃho yathā mandarakandarasthaḥ/
Vīro yathā garvitakuñjarasthaścandro'pi babhāja tathāmbarasthaḥ//
Śilātalaṃ prāpya yathā mṛgendro mahāraṇaṃ prāpya yathā gajendraḥ/
Rājyaṃ samāsādya yathā narendrastathā prakāśo virarāja candraḥ//
Avyaktarekhāmiva candralekhāṃ pāṃsupradigdhāmiva hemarekhām/
Kṣataprarūḍhāmiva bāṇarekhāṃ vayuprabhinnāmiva megharekhāṃ//
—Rāmāyaṇa, Sundarakāṇḍa, 5th Chapter. Verses 4, 7, 26

The image of moon-rise as presented by Vyāsa offers a sharp contrast to this description. On the eleventh day of the great bloody battle fought between the Kouravas and the Pāṇḍavas at the request of all the warriors taking part, there becomes a cessation of hostilities for the time being, enabling the soldiers to take rest. It is arranged that the armistice is to last as long as darkness exists to be removed only by moon-rise. This gives Vyāsa an opportunity of presenting a description of the moon ; but the image as drawn by him loses much of its force, since the norms of literary criticism are not followed by the poet, who prefers to present the objective truth to the poetic. The army of both the sides enjoys rest : the whole battle-field appears like a picture painted by an expert artist.[20] This poetic figure undoubtedly gives expression to Vyāsa's profound poetic insight, since by a single stroke of pen he becomes highly successful in bringing home this still and motionless state of things in the battle-field during the period of armistice. Suddenly the moon appears in the firmament, rendering the eastern quarter brilliant by its rays : the moon is as pale as the cheek of the passionate lady : it comes out from the cave of the eastern region, frighting the herd of elephants in the shape of darkness : this lion of the rising mount is tawny by its brilliant manes in the shape of the rays. Expanding this description Vyāsa says : soon the moon takes hold of the earth,—bearing the splendour of the white bull of lord Śiva : it imitates the beauty of the shaft of cupid and is as charming as the smile ornamenting the lips of newly-wed bride.[21] Both Vyāsa and Vālmīki employ the lion as the standard of comparison, but the technique adopted by the two produces an effect which is widely apart from each other : while the technique of Vālmīki succeeds in producing a lyric effect, that of Vyāsa simply records a description, finding out the similarity of the shining moon to other things. The Simile of the moon with the pale cheek of the passionate lady brings no doubt into light the pallid character of the moon-shine, but this is far from appropriate, since the description at hand is of the bloody battle, and the standard of comparison is not in the least able to put the reader in an appropriate frame of mind, enabling him to experience the horror of the battle, presented in the subsequent section. The presentation of the moon as lion of the eastern cave could have produced a brilliant effect, but the whole atmosphere is marred by drawing out of the poetic figure Rūpaka to its logical extreme,—a method which taxes to a great extent the critical intellect of the reader, making thus the poetic creation, more appealing to the head than to the heart. In his desire to present a clear picture of the shining moon, Vyāsa introduces the splendour of the bull of lord Śiva, as also the beauty of the smile, appearing in the lips of the newly-wed bride : but the image presented by the Simile does not cut much ice, because it stimulates the impression relating to love lying latent in the mind of the reader, and thus makes it diverted from the experience of the frightful, introduced in the section that follows. Vyāsa thus draws a brilliant description of the moon-rise no doubt, but he is not able to relate this description to the organism of his poetry ; and it seems that the image is capable of being drawn out from his poetic edifice even without any substantial loss of charm. With reference to the images drawn by Vālmīki however this cannot be said : his images, as a matter of fact, are part and parcel of his poetic texture. The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki is out and out a specimen of poetic-art,—the Mahābhārata of Vyāsa is a combination of poetry, religion, morality and ethics : Vālmīki relies on his aesthetic instinct, that serves as the guiding principle,—Vyāsa depends more on his critical intellect than on his aesthetic sensibility : and this makes all the difference between the two. But inspite of this, the images of Vyāsa are shining in their own splendour, so much so that they are hugely drawn upon by later poets, and consequently they too are to be given their due.

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[20] Tat tathā nidrayā bhagnamabodhaṃ prāsvapad bhṛśam/
Kuśalaiḥ śilpibhirnyastaṃ paṭe citramivādbhutam//
—Mahābhārata, Droṇaparva, 84th Chapter, Verse 44.

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[21] Tataḥ kumudanāthena kāminigaṇḍapāṇḍunā/
Netrānandena candreṇa māhendrī digalaṅkatā//
Daśaśatākṣakakubdariniḥsṛtaḥ kiraṇakesarabhāsurapiñjaraḥ/
Timiravāraṇayūthavidāraṇaḥ samudiyādudayācalakesari//
Hara vṛṣottamagātrasamadyutiḥ smaraśarāsanapūrṇasamaprabhaḥ/
Navavadhūsmitacārumanoharaḥ pravisṛtaḥ kumudākarabāndhavaḥ//
—Mahābhārata, Droṇaparva 184th Chapter.
Verses 46-48.

CHAPTER V

TRANSFORMATION OF IMAGE : BRILLIANCE OF NATURE

I

Splendour of the Sea

The image presented in the Mahābhārata has been utilised by later poets including Kālidāsa, who have tried to infuse additional charm into the skeleton of the image, adopted in the Mahābhārata. One such image, which appears in a more full-bodied and splendid form in the later literature is represented by the image of the ocean, as drawn by Vyāsa. Kadrū and Vinatā, the two sisters reach the vicinity of the ocean in the morning : and this gives Vyāsa an opportunity of describing the magnitude of the sea with meticulous care. The ocean is the repository of waters : it is great, noisy and full of waves : the ocean is packed up with whales, sharks, large-fishes and hundred thousand aquatic animals of different type, which cause awe and astonishment to the mind : at the same time it is full of shining jems and jewels, that are freely utilised by Varuṇa, the lord of the watery-region. But the form of the sea does not come to an end with it : on the other hand, it contains venomous serpents fore-boding destruction to the mortal region. The ocean is the lord of multitudes of rivers : it extends protection to the fire, the demons and the aquatic animals of diverse types. Consequently, it lies beyond the range of comprehension and thought : with the terrible rumbling caused by its waves, it causes fear in the minds of all experiencers. Containing deep whirlpools and being agitated by the movements of the waves, that strike against the sandy-bank constantly, it seems, as if, the sea dances uplifting its arms comprised of the waves. As the moon shines splendidly in the firmament, the ocean displays a tremor in its watery-bed, as a result of which the tidal bore appears. It is the source of the great conchshell Pāñcajanya and it is the place where the supreme lord Viṣṇu assuming the form of a boar takes shelter in order to raise the earth plunged into the waters of destruction. It constitutes again the resting bed of lord Viṣṇu, who at the end of the cycles takes to meditation reclining on the splendid waters of the ocean. It again constitutes the refuge of the mountain Maināka, frightened through discharge of thunder-bolt by Indra as also of the demons, threatened to be annihilated by the Gods. As all the rivers flow into the ocean, as a result of which the volume of the sea expands, it seems, as if, the ladies in the shape of rivers hasten to get them united with the lover represented by the ocean, which at this material hour experiences profound joy, and gives expression to this feeling of pleasure by tossing of the waves, that stands for its dancing motion. The ocean, as a matter of fact, is the shelter of the whale, the shark and all other animals ; and at the sametime it resemble the firmament in magnitude.[1] As Kadru and Vinatā experience the greatness of the ocean, they are astounded so to say to see its wealth, beauty and magnitude.

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[1] Ākaram sarvaratnānāmālayaṃ varuṇasya ca /
Nāgānāmālayaṃ ramyamuttamaṃ saritāṃ patim //
Pātālajvalanavāsamasurāṇām ca bāndhavam /
Bhayaṃkaraṃ ca sattvānāṃ payasāṃ nidhimarṇavam //
Śubham divyama-martyānāmamṛtasyā-karaṃ paraṃ /
Aprameyamacintyaṃ ca supuṇyajalamadbhutam //
Velādolānilacalaṃ kṣobhodvegasamucchritam /
Vīcihastaiḥ pracalitairnṛtyantamiva sarvataḥ //
Adhyātmayoganidrāṃ ca padmanābhasya sarvataḥ /
Yugādikālaśayanaṃ viṣṇoramitatejasaḥ //
Abhisāryamāṇamaniśam dedṛsāte mahārṇavam /
Āpūryamānamatyarthaṃ nṛtyamānamivormibhiḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, 21st Chapter, Verses—6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 17

Continuing this description of ocean elsewhere Vyāsa says that the ocean is terrible through its aquatic animals and tumultuous noise is at the same time pleasant through its shining jewels and play of waters. With its entire frame glowing by the flame of fire burning with in it and its surface rendered brilliant by shining waves permeated by the rays of the sun, the sea really causes bliss and astonishment in the minds of the experiencers. The relation which the ocean bears to the wind is well-known to Vyāsa, and in drawing the description of the ocean, he freely introduces the close connection which the wind-god bears to the god of the waters. As the great sage Agastya reaches the bank of the ocean accompanied by the Gods, Vyāsa describes the sea as causing fear to the minds of all experiencers, and in order to create the desired effect he prefers to incorporate the intimate relation which the ocean bears to the wind, because these two unitedly cause havoc to the entire creation, leaving the persons left agape in wonder and fear. The ocean as seen by Agastya gives out loud noise ; with its waves drifted by swiftly blowing wind, it appears to take part in a dance, and with exhibition of whirlpools it appears to roar in violent laughter,—the foam representing laugther in the present case.[2]

An analysis of these two pictures of the same ocean as presented by Vyāsa brings into light some of the salient traits of his poetic intuition. Vyāsa like other poets knows the technique of describing one thing in term of another,—a technique, which constitutes the essence of poetry ; but what strikes us most in the image is the art of presenting the poetic truth as practically identical with the matter of fact,—himself remaining unnoticed behind. In the Epic, as a matter of fact, the intention of the poet lies in unfolding of incidents, that are presented as so many film-rolls to the readers. In this respect the epic meets on a common platform with the drama : in both these types of literary documents, the writer goes on narrating chains of incidents, without interpreting them in his own light. A different technique is adopted in the lyric and the novel : in both these forms of literary art, the poet analyses the psychology of the characters created by his muse and interprets the movement of these creations or the courses of events according to his own feelings. It is for this reason that the Meghadūta is regarded as a lyric, even though it contains description of external nature predominently : in the Meghadūta the lyric-effect is produced by interpreting the movements of the rivers according to the feelings of the poet and by unfolding the bleeding heart of Yakṣa, in which the reader traces the heart of the poet, as also that of his ownself. Vyāsa does not follow this technique : as has already been pointed out, like a neutral observer he simply describes the ocean, as it is ; and not as it seems to him to be. But if it is to be admitted that in the whole description we find sparks of poetic imagination, in as much as the ocean with the surging waves, being tossed by the violently blowing breeze is fancied as dancing with its uplifted arms, represented by these waves. The dance of the sea with its arm-like waves uplifted is an unreality, but still Vyāsa puts emphasis on this aspect, as a result of which the unreal assumes the show of the real. At another point Vyāsa refers to the ocean as being filled up constantly by the rivers, which are so many ladies going to the ocean of their own accord, implying thereby that the rivers are so many Abhisārikā-type of lady. The journey of the rivers for the ocean,—their urge to get themselves united with the sea—all these in their turn are inaccuracies, but still Vyāsa incorporates such descriptions, and by putting emphasis on the inaccurate aspect tries to give it the show of the accurate. At yet another point the ocean is compared to the firmament ; and this points out to the ability of the poet of the Mahābhārata to find out connection between things that are far removed from one another. But this Simile has more facts to express : it brings into connection the earthly region and the heavenly one,—the earthly being represented by the ocean and the heavenly being typified by the firmament. This possibly gives a clue to Kālidāsa to conceive of poetry as effecting union between the earth and the heaven,—as also to speak of affection between the sun and the lotus,—the moon and the lily,—the mountain and the could,—the first appearing in each group typifing the earth and the second representing the heaven. It is surprising to note that these three points, focused here appear again and again in the Mahābhārata, sometimes in the same form, making plausible the conjecture that a substantial portion of the epic has been composed by the poet with the help of expressions, taking from floating tradition.

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[2] Tato' bhyagacchan sahitāḥ samudraṃbhīmaniḥsvanam /
Nṛtyantamiva cormībhirvalgantamiva vāyunā //
Hasantamiva phenoughaih skhalantam kandareṣu ca /
Nānāgrāhasamākīrṇaṃ nāṅādvijagaṇānvitam //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 104th Chapter, Verses—22, 23

A fine example of a pedestrian image blossoming into the flower of a brilliant image is exemplified by the description of the ocean, as drawn by Kālidāsa in Canto thirteenth of the Raghuvaṃśam. Here the points available in Vyāsa's image are definitely tracable : but what strikes the reader most is the skill of the poet in effecting an integration of images and in presenting the ocean in a more artistic manner, so much so, that the mind is torn away from the trials and tribulations of the ordinary world, and experiences supernormal delight. Beauty as a matter of fact possesses this power of pulling apart the mind from the ordinary world of experience, as a result of which it savours bliss : it produces thus, an ennobling effect on the mind of the experiencer. The image which Kālidāsa draws of the ocean has this ennobling effect, since what the reader traces here is beauty, that is denoted to the image, not so much by the intrinsic charm of the object of description as by the extra-ordinary capacity of the poet. The description of Kālidāsa opens with a presentation of connection which the ocean bears to the firmament; the sea as a matter of fact exhibiting foams and being divided into two parts by Rāma's bridge resembles the sky, studded with shining stars and cut into twain by the milky-way. The ocean causes astonishment not only by the similarity which it bears to the firmament, but by its association with the sons of Sagara, as well: when the horse of Sagara was taken to the nether region by Kapila, it was dug by the sons of Sagara in their search after the missing horse. From the sea the rays of the sun receive water and help thus the formation of the cloud: treasures grow here: it bears simultaneously the awe-inspiring submarine fire and the gladdening lunar digit, causing delight to the experiencers. The ocean wears a new look from time to time and appears as of diverse forms in different places: in this respect it is comparable to lord Viṣṇu, whose myriad forms lie beyond the range of words. This ocean furnishes a good place to sleep to lord Viṣṇu, who at the end of the cycles contemplates reclining on the brilliant watery-bed, being chanted all along by Brahman, seated on the lotus sprung from the navel of the lord. Being afraid of Indra, the mountains, with their pride humbled by the hurling thunder-bolt take shelter under the ocean, like the terror-stricken kings seeking refuge in the state of the neutral monarch. As lord Viṣṇu tries to pull the earth out of water, assuming the shape of the mighty boar, the crystal clear waters of the ocean constitute the veil of the lady Earth. Here Kālidāsa employs a suggestive expression, that introduces in the mind of the experiencer a picture of wedding, as taking place between the bride Earth and the birde-groom Viṣṇu: during the marriage the face of the bride is required to be veiled: and in the present case the water of the ocean covers the face of the bride by a light veil. And this is not all: the ocean is an expert in the art of amorous toying, as well: it drinks the waters of the river itself and causes all the rivers to partake of its waters at the same time; and thus displays a novel way of enjoyment. As the whales, with their mouth agape receive the water of the ocean, along with small aquatic animals, and close their mouths, streams of water rush forth from the holes of their heads : and the whale seems thus to imitate the beauty of the brilliant spring. The shark and the crocodile, with white foam stuck to their large bodies move about freely, imitating the beauty of the imperial monarch, with his ears ornamented by chowries: The large serpents come out of the water and spread themselves on the sandy banks in order to receive external airs : it is difficult to distinguish them from lines of large waves, that strike the sandy bank of and on : here a considerable help is rendered by the gem implanted on the hoods of the serpents : these glow in the rays of the sun and enable persons to distinguish between the snake and the line of wave. The conch, with its face implanted on the shoots of corals, thrown on the sandy bank by the surging wave and resembling the lips of Sītā in redness move about with great difficulty into the ocean again. As the cloud dives deep into the surface of the ocean in order to draw waters from it, it is caught in the whirlpool ; and the ocean appears to be churned for the second time by the Gods with the mountain Mandara. The row of tamāla and tāla trees, ornamenting the sea-shore looks like a thin mark, as it is seen from a distance : and the shore looks like the black mark encircling the wheel of the moving vehicle. The pleasing breeze available in the sea-shore honours the face of Sītā by applying the pollens of Ketaka-flowers on it, and it seems as if the breeze is unable to stand the delay that is likely to be caused in the process of Sītā's decorations, since it knows Rāma to be extremely desirous of enjoying the company of his beloved.[3] Kālidāsa's description of the ocean ends here; and the improvement made by the poet on the mere matter of fact description of Vyāsa is clearly noticeable. Kālidāsa catches the imagination of his readers by presenting at the initial stage the similarity which the ocean, divided into two parts of Rāma's bridge bears to the firmament, cut into twain by the milky-way. This satisfies the urge of the reader to find out connection between the ocean and the sky,—Rāma's bridge and the milky-way, and enables him to experience a new charm of the ocean, which does not reveal itself in Vyāsa's pedestrian image. The mind of the experiencer relishes astonishing bliss, as the ocean is presented in a new form to him; and this astonishment is redoubled by the introduction of an old anecdote, which associates the ocean with the exploits of the sons of Sagara. Adopting this technique of causing astonishment by placing parallelisms, as also the method of presenting the poetic truth, as shining in the light of another, Kālidāsa brings into relation the grand ocean with the omniform Viṣṇu, since as he says, assuming myriad-forms the ocean lies beyond the comprehension of words like lord Viṣṇu himself. The most beautiful point in the image of Kālidāsa is represented by the picture of lord Viṣṇu raising the earth from the ocean, assuming the shape of a boar: here Kālidāsa makes a display of his skill in employment of the magical phrase, since a single expression thrown by the poet presents the picture of matri-

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[3] Vaidehi ! paśyā 'malayādvibhaktaṃ matsetunā /phenilamamburāśim/
Chāyāpatheneva śaratprasannamākāśamāviṣkṛtacārutāram//
Garbhaṃ dadhatyarkamarīcayo 'smādvivṛddhimatrāśnuvate vasūni/
Abindhanaṃ vahnimasou-bibharti prahlādanaṃ jyotirajanyanena//

Nābhiprarūḍhāmburuhāsanena saṃstūyamānaḥ prathamenadhātrā/
Amuṃ yugāntocitayoganidraḥ saṃhṛtya lokānpuruṣo 'dhiśete//
Rasātalādadibhavena puṃsā bhuvaḥ prayuktodvahanakriyāyāḥ/
Asyācchamambhaḥ pralayapravṛddhaṃ muhūrtavakrābharaṇaṃ
babhūva//
Mukhārpaṇeṣu prakṛtipragalbhāḥ svayaṃ taraṃgādharadānadakṣaḥ/
Ananyasāmānyakalatravṛttiḥ pibatyasou pāyayate ca sindhūḥ//
Tavādharaspardhiṣu vidrumeṣu paryastametatsahasor mivegāt/
Urdhvānkuraprotamukhaṃ kathaṃcitkleśādapakrāmati śankhayūtham//
Dūrādayaścakranibhasya tanvī tamālatālīvanarājinīlā/
Ābhāti velā lavaṇāmburāśerdhārānibaddheva kalankarekhā//
—Raghuvamśam, Canto 13, Verses—2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15

monial alliance as taking place between the lord Viṣṇu and the lady Earth. Kālidāsa says that in the nuptial ceremony, the water of the ocean serves as the light veil of the bride: this statement kindles up the imagination of the reader, who not only experiences the beauty of the water of the sea; but is charmed so to say to cognise the good Earth as a coy-bride, —the lord Viṣṇu as a good bride-groom,—and the crystal-clear water as the gorgeously shining thin veil. Another brilliant point is furnished by the description of the union of the rivers with the sea. The rivers flow to the ocean: the ocean absorbs their waters, and in its turn gives its own waters to the river. This suggests to the poetic-mind of Kālidāsa the idea of an abnormal mode of amorous dalliance, in which the lover himself sucks the lips and causes the other party also to experience the same flavour. The third point is furnished by the description of the sea-shore, which is represented as shining in the light of the dark stain appearing in the rim of the wheel, Kālidāsa's imagination moves at its highest flight, when required to present the truth, as permeated by the light of a new entity, and this flight of poetic imagination is definitely tracable in the image of the ocean. The breeze associated with the shore, thus is represented as honouring the face of Sītā applying pollens of Ketaka-flowers in full blossom; and this shows the attachment which the breeze has for Sītā. Kālidāsa as a matter of fact introduces a number of things in the image of the ocean: and while the reader comprehends it, he not only experiences the magnitude and the beauty of the ocean, but cognises the charm of the firmament, holding the milky-way, the magnitude of omniform Viṣṇu,—the beauty of the coy-bride,—the splendour of the novel mode of amorous toying,—the urge of the breeze to wait upon Sītā, and so on. The images of Kālidāsa thus are comprised of a number of ingredients, all of which are united by the poetic-genius of the poet: this poetic genius presents a unified and integrated picture of the whole theme by taking ingredients from the image, as drawn by Vyāsa. Though in the image of Kālidāsa, the simple image of the Mahābhārata is transformed fully by the poetic-genius, which shows considerable skill in the art of effecting integration of images, still the image of Vyāsa supplies the materials necessary for building it up : and the indebtedness of Kālidāsa to Vyāsa therefore, is definitely to be recognised.

The ocean receives a separate treatment at the hands of successors of Kālidāsa in poetry, who draw our attention to its excellence, as also to its inherent defects, as a result of which it does not cause delight to the way-farer. These writers make a display of a new angle of vision,—of a new attitude to life : and these are fully revealed in the portraits of the ocean, as drawn by them. Taking his cue from the description drawn by Vyāsa and Kālidāsa, the poetaster Vibhoka refers to the existence of submarine-fire underneath the sea as also to the ancient tale of the sea giving shelter to the mountains, afraid of Indra, but he casts a sarcastic fling at the ocean by saying that the mountains eager to maintain their wings and taking refuge under the ocean are scorched so to say by the heat of the submarine-fire, blazing within it.[4] The whole scene appears to Vibhoka in this light, as he is accustomed to experience the sad-lot confronting a human being, who is taken from frying-pan to the fire in his struggle for warly-existence. Another poetaster Śabdārṇava draws our attention to excellence and magnitude of the ocean by saying that the sea constitutes the source of the Goddess of fortune herself,—that its magnitude is testified by the very fact that the entire earth forms the island of the ocean : the munificence of the sea is gathered from the fact that even the clouds approach it for water, and its power is comprehended from its capacity to cause havoc to the creation.[5] This poet experiences profound astonishment at the sight of the greatness of the ocean, and he makes an attempt to transfuse the astonishment generated in him to the mind of the refined-reader, and in doing it he uses an expression, that is characterised by lucidity. Such descriptions are built up mainly on the line of the images presented by ancient poets; but the characteristic features of images of this age are marked by a tendency to look at life from an unusual angle,—of exposing the sins and ills of life in a novel manner. These images are represented mainly by passages intended to censure the ocean. One poet of unknown name thus says that the gems constitute the slabs of stone of the ocean, which is inhabited by lord Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī,—that its sands are constituted of pearls,—that the nectar forms its water,—and that its banks are shining with celestial trees : all these, the poet says, are listened to form a distance with pleasure ; one who reaches the vicinity of the ocean however is shocked to find that it is not able to quench the thirst even of the thirsty. No statement indeed can bring into light the utter emptiness of the sea in the manner in which it is done by it. As a matter of fact, from a distance many things appear as pleasurable entities, but when they are approached, one is rather shocked to find that what is relishable from a distance is most unpleasant and deformed. Another poet Śubhāṅka tries to humble the pride of the sea by saying that though it touches the firmament by its ever-rising waves, and though its waters are full of resplendent jewels, yet it is a fact that the sea is rejected by the thirsty, since its salty-waters cannot quench his thirst.[6] The tendency to find out faults of the great, that had hither to been accepted as of unquestionable nature manifests itself clearly in this image: such doubt is not tracable in the composition of earlier poets. Another poetaster Lakṣmidhara interprets the blazing submarine-fire of the ocean in a new light. This poet possibly had the opportunity of drinking the cup of misery to its full: possibly he could not experience happiness in his personal life. All these prompt him to explain the submarine fire as an external manifestation of sorrow caused by failure of the dependants of sea in every sphere of life. The Goddess of fortune, residing in the sea is fickle: the moon extracted from it is darkened by stain: the gems that arise from it are pointed and crooked: the food that the lord Śiva is forced to partake of is poison: thinking all these weak points of factors associated with it, the ocean experiences profound shock, and the submarine-fire is nothing but an external manifestation of that shock.[7] This is a novel way of presenting the submarine-fire indeed! Here as we find the poet starts to experience the fact that the universe is a disorderly mass,—that there is no perfect order in the universe,—and that all are not guided by the benign law of nature. In Vyāsa and Kālidāsa this feeling is conspicuous by its absence. Taking all the elements, introduced by Vyāsa and Kālidāsa, therefore, the later poets build up their own images, but their tendency to view that life from an unusual angle, their fondness for casting a sarcastic fling at the normal course of life gives a total transformation to the images, which strike us, not so much by the magnitude and wealth of ocean as by the novel outlook of the poet.

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[4] Aye vārāṃ bhartaḥ kuliśakarakopapratibhayā—
Dayaṃ pakṣapremṇā giripatisutastvāmupagataḥ /
Tvadantarvāstavyo yadi punarayaṃ vāḍavaśikhī
Pradīptaḥ pratyaṅgaṃ glapayati tataḥ kosya śaraṇam //
Vibhoka' Sadukti-karṇāmṛta. Page 454. Verse 1674

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[5] Kiṃ brūmo jaladheḥ śrıyaṃsahi khalu Śrījanmabhūmiḥ svayaṃ
Vācyaḥ kiṃ mahimāsya yasya hi kila dvīpaṃ mahīti śrutiḥ /
Tyāgaḥ kopi sa tasya bibhrati jagadyasyārthinopyambudāḥ
Śakteḥ kaiva kathāpi yasya bhavati kṣobheṇa Kalpāntaram //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, page 456, Verṣe—1678

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[6] Grāvāṇo maṇayo harirjalacaro lakṣmīḥ payomānuṣi
Muktoughāḥ sikatāḥ prabālalatikāḥ śaivālamambha sudhā /
Tīre kalpámahīruhaḥ kimaparaṃ sarvatra nāmāmbudher
Dūrātkarṇarasāyanaṃ nikaṭatamastṛṣṇāpi no śāmyati //
—Sadukti—Karṇāmṛta, page 459, Verse—1691.

[7] Lolā śrīḥ śaśabhṛtkalaṅkamalinaḥ krūro manigrāmanīr
Mādyatyabhramuvallabhopi satataṃ tatkālakūṭaṃ viṣam /
Ityantaḥsvakuṭumbadurṇayaparā marśāgninā dahyate
Gāḍaṃ vāḍavanāmadheyadahanavyājena vārāṃ nidhiḥ //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛtam, page 461, Verse—1696.

II

Grandeur of the Grove

Vyāsa's image of the pleasure-grove equally deserves analysis and careful consideration. As the Pāṇḍavas reach the Dvaita-forest Vyāsa pounces upon the opportunity of drawing an image of the Dvaita-forest. Here also he follows the same technique of presenting the objective truth, as it is, without intermingling his own passions with it. In Vyāsa poetic mind acts simultaneously with the analytical mind necessary for expounding principles on morality and polity : for this reason the analytical mind often prevents the poet from interpreting nature in his own light,—from seeing it through his own eyes : as a result of this Vyāsa seldom takes to that flight of fancy, which usually carries the poet off his feet and enables him to take part in high-flown description. The Dvaita-forest thus is presented as being seen by the Imperial Ruler, as shining at the end of the Summer season in the tamāla, the tāla, the Āmra, the madhūk, the nīpa and such other trees in full blossom : on the tops of these trees sit the peacock, the cuckoo and such other birds, giving out sweet notes. Along with the she-elephant, the wild tuskers, with flow of ichor streaming down their cheeks move freely leading herds of elephants. Ascetics displaying matted locks take their habitat in the hermitages, dotted around the forest. Trees in full blossom, birds chirping sweetly, the rutting elephants carrying the scent of ichor, and the noble-souled ascetics—all these combine to give the Dvaitavana a charming look : and Vyāsa in his endeavour to bring into light the charmingness of the grove simply points out to these features, himself remaining neutral observer to the beauty. A similar description of the mighty forest situated on the peak of the Himālaya, in which Arjuna practises an austere penance in order to obtain the terrific missile from the lord Śiva in drawn by Vyāsa, who follows the same technique in presenting this image too. This forest is full of thorns, making it inaccessible to others: it is resplendent in numerous fruits and flowers,—packed up by birds of different types,—is characterised by the movements of animals of innumerable varieties, and is waited upon by semi-divine beings. Reaching that impenetrable forest Arjuna sees trees in full blossom, with birds reclining on them: he also cognises mighty rivers, moving with large whirlpools. The forest is rendered charming by the sweet-note of the swan and the crane, the hooting of the cuckoo,—the cackling of the quail, as also by crystal-clear, pure and cool waters.[8] The trees, the bird, the animal, the semi-divine being and the river—all these combine to infuse beauty to the grove: and Vyāsa like an indifferent observer simply draws the attention of the reader to this charming aspect, without furnishing his own interpretation of the situation. But nevertheless his belief in the existence of a perfect order in the universe reveals itself in his description of the grove, intended for practising austere penance by Arjuna. The hermitage of Dadhīca is painted in a similar manner. The Gods reach the hermitage situated on the bank of the river Sarasvatī, in describing which Vyāsa says that it in packed up by various trees and creepers, with bees singing on them, and the note of bees resembling the chanting of the Sāman. A number of birds and animals, opposed to one another find a peaceful resort in the hermitage, which is inhabited equally by the buffalo and the tiger, the elephant and the lion, the cuckoo and the crow. The beauty of this surrounding, Vyāsa says, is comparable to the charm of the heaven, where celestial trees shine in their full splendour for all time to come. The painting of this hermitage brings into light Vyâsa's belief in the existence of an order in the universe, since he says that the animals opposed to one another live peacefully in the abode, causing the misapprehension of the heavenly region so to say.

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[8] Tvarayā parayā yuktastapase dhṛtaniścayaḥ/
Vanaṃ kaṇṭakitaṃ ghorameka evānvapadyata//
Nānāpuṣpaphalopetaṃ nānāpakṣiniṣevitam/
Nanāmṛgagaṇākīrṇaṃ siddhacāraṇasevitam//
Haṃsakāraṇḍavodgitāḥ sārasābhirutāstathā/
Puṃskokilarutāścāiva krouñcabarhiṇanāditāḥ//
Manoharavanopetāstasminnatiratho 'rjunaḥ/
Puṇyaśitāmalajalāḥ paśyan prītamanābhavat//
Ramanīye vanoddeśe ramamāṇo 'rjunastadā/
Tapasyugre vartamāne ugratejā mahāmanāḥ//
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 38th Chapter,
Verses—14, 15, 20, 21, 22.

This painting of external nature is adopted by Kālidāsa, as also by some poets belonging to the post-Kālidāsan period, but in their hands, particularly in the hand of Kālidāsa the technique gets a transformation, as a result of which the connoisseur is delighted to experience the fresh charm of external nature, donated by the superb poetic genius. As the vernal season approaches, the southern quarter discharges air resembling a sign of sorrow, and the entire nature wears a now look. The Aśoka produces flowers without waiting for a touch of the feet of ladies : the fresh mango blossoms are utilised by cupid as his shafts : the Karṇikāra offends the mind by its unscentedness : the cuckoo gives out sweet notes, which become the speech of cupid able to counter-act the sensitiveness of jealous ladies : the ascetics find it difficult to control their minds. In bringing out further the beauty of the vernal season Kālidāsa continues to say that, the black bee drinks honey in one flower vessel following his own beloved and the black antelope scratches by his horn the female-deer, her eyes closed by his touch : the she-elephants gives out of love to its mate a mouthful of water scented with the lotus dust : even the trees receive from their wives, represented by creepers, having large clusters of flower the entwining embrace of their bending branch-arms. Kālidāsa presents the beauty of the grove, in which lord Śiva practises austere penance, but this image is definitely different from that, as introduced by Vyāsa in order to describe the surrounding of the place in which Arjuna sits on meditation or Dadhīca passes time on contemplation. Kālidāsa sees the entire atmosphere through the eyes of a lover, as a result of which the beauty of the spring appears to him in the shape of a lady, putting forth the Tilaka-flower as a mark of beauty, adorned by the orient sun resembling a red tincture, and having young mango blossoms for her lips.[9] Those aspects of nature, that are associated with the bliss of happy conjugal life are naturally brought into prominence by Kālidāsa : and judging from this angle it is possible to trace sufficient lyricism even in the epic Kumārasambhava. The passion of Kālidāsa prompts him to describe the simple fact of creepers encircling the trees as the entwining embrace of a lady, trying to keep her lover in deep embrace.

9, Kuberajuptāṃ diśamuṣṇaraśmou gantuṃ
pravṛtte samayaṃ vilaṅghya/
Digdakṣiṇā gandhavahaṃ mukhena
vyalīkaniśvāsamivotsasarja//
Lagnadvirephāñjanabhakticitraṃ
mukhe madhuśrīstilakaṃprakāsya/
Rāgeṇa bālāruṇakomalena cūtapravālo—
sṭhamalaṃcakāra//
Madhu dvirephaḥ kusumaikapātre
papou priyāṃ svāmanuvartamānaḥ/
Śṛṅgeṇa ca sparśanimīlitākṣīṃ mṛgima—
kaṇḍuyata kṛṣṇasāraḥ//
Paryāptapuṣpastabakastanābhyaḥ sphuratpra—
vālouṣṭhamanoharābhyaḥ/
Latāvadhubhyaṣtaravo 'pyavāpurvina—
mṛśākhābhujabandhanāni//
—Kumārasaṃbhava, Canto III, Verses—25, 30, 36, 39

Kālidāsa thus takes the reader to an atmosphere, where love reigns supreme, and the feeling of the human mind makes itself felt more prominently than the charm of external nature. Kālidāsa is indebted to Vālmīki for this technique, and following in the footsteps of his great master, he intermingles the passions of human mind with the beauty of external nature, in such a way that, as the reader dives deep into the image, he not only experiences the fresh charm of external nature, but is delighted to see before him the moods and playfulness of the human mind as well. And in these moods and playfulness, he finds to his utter surprise his own feeling and passions, as a result of which his sense of self-pride is fulfilled to certain extent : and when this is done, he experiences tremendous joy, since the savouring of his ownself comes to him as a pleasant surprise. This technique is adopted in other works, as well, by Kālidāsa. The Ṛtusamhāra, which presents charming description of seasons is characterised by employment of the same technique. The night in the summer season is more delightful, because the moon shines bright, and coolness refreshes the earth : at midnight the young delights in song, dance and wine : the moon in jealous of youthful love retires in sorrow. But the summer days also have charms of their own : the antelope rushes to the mirage : the serpent being heated by the scorching rays of the sun takes shelter under the plume of the peacock, forgetting its animosity with it : the elephant, being desirous of sipping water does not experience any fear from the lion, who is equally thirsty and goes to the same lake to enjoy a pleasing drink.[10] The rainy season comes in kingly guise, borne by the elephant in the shape of cloud : the lightning serves as banner and thunder his drum. The emotion of love is awakened by the sight of the clouds, which bend down to kiss the peak of the mountains. And not only the lover but the entire creation experiences a change at the advent of the rainy season. The bee forsaking the lotus-plant, bereft of the lotus rushes towards the plume of the peacock, taking it to be a blue-lotus,—the breeze, surcharged with the fragrance of the Kadamba, the sarja, the arjuna and the Ketakī and carrying water-sprays and consequently cool causes longing in the mind of all concerned. The precinct of the forest, with its heat reduced by fresh-showers gives expression to its delight as if by the Kadamba,—dances as if through movement of branches and laughs a hearty laugh, as it were, by the blades of the Ketaka-flowers.[11] If the Rainy season approaches like a victorious monarch, Autumn comes like a bride, clad in a garment of sugar-cane, girdled in ripening rice and carrying a face of blooming lotus. The autumnal night gathers in volume day by day like a child bursting forth into the maturity of a lady : this lady in the shape of night wears ornaments of stars, displays a brilliant face in the moon and wraps herself up in the garment of moon-light. The rainbow is lost in the clouds : the lightning does not shine : the row of crane does not fan the firmament, and the peacock does not look at the over-cast skies. This change in nature causes a change in the heart of the lovers, who long for union with each other. The Autumn, Kālidāsa continues, donates the beauty of the moon on the lovely face of the lady,—the cackling of the swan on the anklet studded with gems and the loveliness of the Vandhuka-flower on the lips.[12] But this beauty of the Autumn also has its end. And when Autumn goes, the Hemanta approaches, rendering the earth charming with crops and new sprouts : the lodhra tree-flowers, the corn ripens, the lotus perishes and the snow falls. The approach of the cold season causes change in the lady, who decorates her lotus like face in the morning sun or while basking in the soft rays of the sun falls asleep or takes off from her head the faded wreath or reclines on the couch being exhausted by continued labour of playful amours. As the Winter comes in its fullness the earth becomes covered with clusters of grown up rice and sugar-cane : people do not enjoy nights rendered cooler by the thick fall of snow. But lovers know how to make the best out of a bad job. At nights delighted women drink in company with their lovers attractive, excellent and intoxicating wine : in the morning they go out laughing from the bed-chamber, looking at the beauty of their frame, augmented by dalliance, and in late morning put on a dress suited for the day, which may enable them to enjoy the clear sun shine.[13] After the Winter, approaches the Spring time like a fighter, having for his sharp arrows the young mango-blossoms,—for his resplendent bow-string the row of bees; and with his approach cupid becomes all the more powerful. He makes the limbs of women thin, pale and languid with passion. The external nature equally experiences a pleasing change: the male-cuckoo kisses his mate with passionate joy,—the mango-trees kindle ardent desires in woman's hearts,—the Aśoka trees putting forth sprouts and bearing countless blossoms make the hearts of young ladies sorrowful. The image of the Spring ends with a prayer in which Kālidāsa utters a note of benediction to the effect that cupid, the conqueror of the world, in company with Spring is to grant happiness to the entire creation.[14] An analysis of this description of seasonal charms shows the importance attached to human mind in the scheme of Kālidāsa, who never presents nature as divorced from human feeling, just as he never delineates the human mind, as divorced from the beauty of external nature. As a matter of fact, in Kālidāsa the merger between the poet of nature and the poet of human heart is so complete that, it becomes difficult for the appreciative reader to ascertain as to where the poet of nature Kālidāsa stops and the poet of human heart Kālidāsa starts functioning, and the vice versa. Kālidāsa thus takes the cue from Vyāsa, but the importance assigned by him to human heart, as also to his personal moods gives a pleasing transformation to the image, in which it becomes difficult to find out the skeleton of the Mahābhārata painting.

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[10] Niśāḥ śaśāṅkakṣatanīlarājayaḥ kvacidvicitraṃ jalayantramandiram /
Maṇiprakārāḥ sarasaṃ ca candanaṃ śucoupriye yānti
janasya sevyatām //

Ravermayūkhairabhitāpito bhṛśaṃ vidahyamānaḥ pathi
taptapāṃsubhiḥ /
Avāṅmukho jihbhagatiḥ śvasanmuhuḥ phaṇī mayūrasya tale niṣīdati //
—Ṛtusaṃhāra, Canto I, Verses—2, 13

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[11] Saśīkarāmbhodharamattakuñjara
Staḍitpatāko' śaniśabdamardalaḥ /
Samāgato rājavaduddhatadyutir—
Ghanāgamaḥ kāmijanapriyaḥ priye //
—Ṛtusaṃhāra, Canto II, Verse—1

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[12] Kāśāṃśukā vikacapadmamanojñavaktrā
Sonmādahaṃsaravanūpuranādaramyā /
Āpakvaśā lirucirā natagā trayaṣṭiḥ
Prāptā śarannavadhūriva rūparamyā //
Tārāgaṇapravarabhūṣaṇamudvahantī
Meghā varodhaparimuktaśaśāṅkavaktrā /
Jyotsnā dukūlamamalaṃ rajanī dadhānā
Vṛddhiṃ prayātyanudinaṃ pramadeva bālā //
—Ṛtusaṃhāra, Canto—III, Verses—I, 7

[13] Prarūḍhaśālīkṣucayāvṛtakṣitiṃ kvacitsthitakrouñcaninādarājitam/
Prakāmakāmaṃ pramadājanapriyaṃ varorukālaṃ śiśirāhvayaṃśṛṇu//
Sugandhiniḥśvāsavikampitotpalaṃ manoharaṃ kāmaratiprabodhakam/
Niśāsu hṛṣṭāḥ saha kāmibhiḥ striyaḥ pibanti madyaṃ
madanīyamuttamam//
—Ṛtusaṃhāra, Canto V, Verses—1, 10

Śrīharṣa of much later date draws a pleasing image of the pleasure-grove of Nala, and the influence exerted on him by Kālidāsa is clearly tracable. Śrīharṣa is usually noted for his dexterity in employment of the obscure as also for his skill in insertion of knolly points throughout the composition ; and it is said that a proper appreciation of the Naiṣadha-carita is a consummate skill of traditional learning. But it is to be admitted to the credit of Śrīharṣa, that he masters the art of presenting the poetic truth after seeing it through the eyes of his characters, as also introducing it after intermingling it with his own passions and actions. As a result of this the human heart attains more prominence in his painting of the grove, and the beauties of the different trees and flowers and interpreted by him in the light of charm of human heart in its different moods. Nala enters the pleasure-grove and sees the trees rich in fruits and flowers : the laden branches are shaken by the breeze, and this sight makes the poet feel the spectacle of old ascetics presenting offerings of fruits and flowers to guests, with their body trembling through old age. The Ketaka-flower is presented in a novel way by Śrīharṣa : he seizes upon this opportunity of introducing an ancient legend, because this flower is associated with an act of repudiation, which it obtained at the hand of lord Śiva. Out of his love for the recondite and the unfamiliar, Śrīharṣa conducts the mind of the receptive reader to the land of ancient tales and legends, and thereby causes astonishment in his mind ; but, nevertheless, the fancy of the poet, which takes a long stride deserves notice. The black-bee is reclining on the full-blown ketaka : the poet says that, this is not actually the black-bee, but infancy acquired by ketaka through its repudiation by the lord of the three worlds Śiva. The dāḍima bears thorns on its limbs, and the poet sees the horripilations of the lady in these thorns. The fruit is kissed by the parrot, and consequently cut into twain : this is represented by Śrīharṣa as the bleeding heart of the tree, which laments its estrangement from its consort. The existence of thorns on the limbs of the tree and the rift created by the beak of the parrot on its fruits prompt the poet to paint an image of a sorrowing lady; and as the receptive reader gets himself acquainted with the image, he is struck, not so much by the charm of the external nature but by the feelings of human heart. The creeper, shaken by the favourable breeze and carrying water-sprays on its limbs is gazed at by the royal prince with apprehension and joy. The creeper is represented by Śrīharṣa as a lady kissed by her lover, who experiences delight, and manifests itself through drops of perspiration appearing in her limbs.[15] In Kālidāsa a perfect balance is established between the painting of nature and the painting of human heart, but in Śrīharṣa the balance hangs precariously in favour of the latter; and it seems as if the poet utilises the beauty of the pleasure-grove to unfold the mystery of human heart. But here also he does not obtain complete success: the feelings of human heart are smothered beneath the huge mass of recondite allusions and obscure poetic figures, which are so much loved by Śrīharṣa.

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[14] Praphullacūtāṅkuratīkṣṇasāyako dvirephamālāvilasaddhanurguṇaḥ/
Manāṃsi bhettuṃ surataprasaṅgināṃ vasanta yoddhā
samupāgataḥ priye//
Āmrī mañjulamañjarī varaśaraḥ satkiṃśukaṃ yaddhanurjyā
Yasyālikulaṃ kalaṅkarahitaṃ chatraṃ sitāṃśuḥ sitam/
Mattebho malayānilaḥ parabhṛtā yadbandino lokajitso'yaṃ
Vo vitaritaritu vitanurbhadraṃ vasantānvitaḥ//
—Ṛtusaṃhāra, Canto VI, Verses—I, 28.

Coming to the poets of lesser importance we find a complete change in the technique of painting the beauty of nature. That aspect of human life, which remained ignored so long starts to receive attention, and as a matter of fact, it finds its place into the poetic image. The change experienced by the external nature in spring receives recognition from the poet Sāmpīka, who is more interested in the exit of winter than in the advent of any new thing. In drawing an image of the vernal season, he says, the trouble of cold disappears,—the mild rays of the sun scattered throughout the day's gather in volume,—the sun conducts his chariot slowly,—the moon, free from the curtain of mist shines splendidly,—and the action of the shafts of cupid spreads in greater volume.[16] The description is plain and simple : Sāmpīka introduces that aspect of spring time, which is charming by itself, as a result of which the image causes delight to the reader through charm intrinsic to the object of description. Sāmpīka surely is not gifted with that strong intuition, which is in a position to grant additional charm to the content of description : but the mode in which he presents the charming content itself has a pleasing flavour of its own. Following the technique adopted by Śrīharṣa, an anonymous poet interprets the Kiṃśuka and Koraka,—flowers associated with spring in a novel manner. The Kiṃśuka, he says forms the refuge of fire, afraid of Winter,—the koraka is nothing other than the smoke deposited by that fire : this is evident from the fact that these two flowers in full blossom consume the hearts of ladies of the travellers. Here also the charm of the koraka and the Kiṃśuka are rendered subsequent to the beauty of the fire, as also to the feeling, which it causes in the minds of the ladies : but the technique is more or less old ; and the anonymous poet fails to give expression to a new outlook on life. This out look reveals itself in the image drawn by the poet Bhavānanda of the implacable Summer season : in Summer he says, the stone resembles the adamant,—the king's highway becomes as hot as the iron-bar,—absence of breeze leads to total discomfort,—the sand behaves like fuel,—the whole earth is dried up so to say, and the flow of life seems to be suspended during noon.[17] Bhavānanda does not allow his imagination to take a long flight, as a result of which the truth presented by him becomes identical with the objective truth : though no new light is imparted to it by any external object, it captures the mind of the reader totally, because he finds in the image those very things, with which he is extremely familiar ; and in the difficulty experienced by the earth, he finds his own difficulty. Another poet Yodeśvara draws similarly a plain description of the forest-fire, causing havoc, as it receives aid from the storm in Summer. The forest-fire causes the animals and the birds to perish : the places of worship of divinities are destroyed : the quarters become engulfed in dark columns of thick smoke : as the large trees, along with fruits and flowers are consumed, the whole forest wears the look of a destroyed ant-hill. No picture of the blazing forest-fire can be more simple than this, which arrests the mind of the receptive reader, not by the play of poetic imagination,—but by the plain character of the truth presented. The image enables the reader to get himself acquainted once again with devastation caused by forest-fire : as he reads the specimen of poetry, he sees as it were the destruction of the animal and plant world, occuring before him, and experiences, so to say, the hot touch of the blazing fire. The animal of lesser importance receives recognition at the hands of these poets ; and one Abhinanda belonging to this group makes the crow, the cuckoo and the peacock the most important of all the elements associated with the rainy season.

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[15] Phalāni puṣpāṇi ca pallave kare
Vayo'tipātodgatavātavepite/
Sthitaiḥ samādāya maharṣivārdhakāt
Vane tadātithyamaśikṣi śākhibhiḥ//
Vinidrapatrāligatālikaitavān
Mṛgāṅkacūḍāmaṇivarjanārjitam /
Dadhānamāśāsu cariṣṇu duryaśaḥ
Sa kautuki tatra dadarśa ketakaṃ //
Viyoginīmaikṣata dāḍimīmasau
Priyasmṛteḥ spaṣṭamuditakaṇṭakām
Phalastanasthānavidīrṇarāgihṛd
Viśacchukāsyasmarakimśukāśugām //
—Naiṣadhacarita. Canto I, Verses—77,78,83

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[16] Atītā śītārtiḥ prasarati śanairuṣmakaṇikā
Dināni sphāyante ravirapi ratham mantharayati /
Himāninirmuktaḥ sphurati nitarāṃ śitakiraṇaḥ
Śarāṇāṃ vyāpāraḥ kusumadhanuṣo na vyavahitaḥ //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page 328, Verse—1227

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[17] Pāṣāṇaḥ kuliśāyate purapatham saṃtaptalohāyate
Nirvātaṃ dahanāyate ca nibiḍāṅgārāyate śarkarā/
Etasmiṃstaruṇapracaṇḍamahasaḥ prouḍhātape sarvataḥ
Kṣoṇī śuṣyati vālukā ca saritāṃ vahnisphuliṅgāyate //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page—337, Verse—1260

The attempt of the female-crow to build up a nest of its own, as also that of the cuckoo to have a taste of the half-ripe black berry find their entrance into the image of the rainy season, as presented by this poet. Abhinanda like poets of his group presents the familiar, enabling the readers to see their well-known entities once again, and thereby to bring into consummation their self-pride. But the poet Langadatta steals a march over other poets of his group, since he takes us out from the forest to the dilapidated hut, which streams during the rainy season. In describing the rainy season he expends his total energy in bringing out the inconveniences experienced by the poor house-wife. This poor-lady laments for the grains, rendered wet by the rains : consoles the crying children : bails out the water deposited in the room : protects the straws, that constitute the bed : and all the while does other jobs of the house-hold placing on her head an wornout tray.[18] Of all the pictures of the rainy season this appears to be most successful, since it introduces us to the ordinary life experienced by the commoner. The effect created by this image is deeper than that created by Kālidāsa even, in which the rainy season is presented as a victorious king, having for its elephants the clouds and for banner the lightning. The image of Langadatta is surcharged with intensity of feeling : and it is curious to note that while the poets of eminence like Śrīharṣa and ,others do not follow the norms set forth by Ānandavardhana and his followers, these poets of lesser importance follow them with meticulous care, as a result of which their creation appears as expressive of the poet's profound feeling, and consequently as a specimen of the best type of poetic art.

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[18] Saktūñśocatisaṃplutānpratikarotyākrandato bālakān
Pratyutsiñcati karpareṇa salilaṃ śayyātṛṇaṃ rakṣati /
Dattvā mūrdhni viśīrṇaśūrpaśakalam jīrṇe gṛhe vyākulā
Kiṃ tadyanna karoti duḥsthagṛhiṇī deve bhṛśaṃ barṣati //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page, 609, Verse—2245.

To Kālidāsa Autumn comes like a coy-bride; and the autumnal sight approaches like a lady, decked in the ornament of twinkling stars, but to the poet of lesser importance it appears with its clear firmament, clear water and shininig field. This poet is enchanted so to say to see the change in plant and animal world infused by the advent of Autumn, and arrests this new look, worn by nature in the image drawn by him. In presenting a painting of Autumn, the poet Saṃgrāmadatta thus refers to the firmament, rendered white by clouds, bereft of water,—the forest tracts, wearing new look,—the agricultural fields, shining with ripe corns and the sandy bank of the river, bearing foot-print of moving birds. The poet employs the technique of naturalism, which presents the poetic truth as shining in its own splendour, without receiving any aid from external agencies. Though no foreign entity is introduced from outside in order to illuminate Autumn, still the effect created by the image is splendid, since it presents before the reader his familiar entities in a new garb. The same technique is employed by the poet Bhāsa, who while presenting the simple truth introduces certain small Similes, that open before the reader the gate of many new meanings. In Autumn the sun shines a bit more violently like the mean grown rich just now,—the antelope leaves its horns like an ungrateful friend,—the water becomes clear like the thoughts of an ascetic,—and the mud becomes dry like the desires of the poor passionate.[19] Bhāsa tries to bring home the change experienced by the different aspects of nature, but in his attempt to do so he introduces certain Similes, which bring into light more clearly the particular phase, that is intended to be emphasised by the poet. The employment of these Similes points out to the new approach of Bhāsa, who does not look upon the sights and sounds of nature in the same way as his predecessors,—but casts rather a crooked glance at the different aspects of life and nature. This new approach to life is a characteristic feature of poets of lesser importance of comparatively later date, who extend to us an opportunity of getting ourselves acquainted once again with the familiar sights and sounds, which, however, are presented in novel way. The poet Yogeśvara draws an image of Hemanta in a similar manner. In the season of Hemanta, the courtyard of the common cultivator remains packed up by crops,—the bullock takes rest and the cow experiences comfort as the long night gives her ample opportunity for taking rest. This is arrested in the image of Hemanta as presented by Yogeśvara : and following in line with him another anonymous poet presents the activities of the common cultivator during this season. The couple of hare moves delightfully in the field, picking up corns here and there : some body tries to catch hold of the moving couple, and asks others to join in his pursuit for the hare : all the cultivators giving up their attempt to cut the mature crop collect and run after the hare carrying ropes and sticks in their hands. Poetic naturalism is adopted here also, and the poet presents very familiar picture, which is noticed in the village, but the shift in emphasize from the charm of nature to the activities of man is to be noted. The anonymous poet instead of expending his energy on depicting the seasonal charm of Autumn prefers to paint minutely the activities of common cultivator, who experiences variety in Hemanta, as the opportunity to run after the poor hare is extended to him by the season. The poet possibly finds in the pleasure obtained by the common cultivator, the pleasure which one derives from sacrifice made by the weak, which is represented the image by the poor hare. This new idea is capable of being traced from the expressed-content ; and when the expressed and the unexpressed, both are taken into consideration, the sarcastic fling which the poet hurls at life becomes more clear. This attitude of looking at life from a wrong and unfamiliar angle prompts the poet Śatānanda to draw an image of the traveller moving from door to door for simple shelter during night, and receiving in his turn abuses and rejections from house-wife. The traveller approaches the housewife for a shelter, as he is tired : he proposes to spend the night near the door or on an unused corner : but the lady refuses to extend shelter to him : and the traveller is seen coming out of the house, holding a handful of straw, which constitutes his only property : and as he does this he experiences pride. Very few descriptions are in a position to approach this one in its realistic attitude : but what strikes the reader most is the assertion of the poet that the traveller feels pride as he comes out of the house carrying a handful of straws : this image throws profound light on the hallowness of the life, which we are accustomed to, since as it says, joy and sorrow are relative feelings, and what is sport to one is death to another. Another poet Bāṇa in a similar strain draws our attention to the disadvantage of the common wayfarer, who takes his shelter in the leafy hut dedicated to the village God. In the evening he basks in the fire-lit in the temple, and this does not court the bite of cold : in late evening he takes a good sleep consequently ; but as night becomes late and late, he tries to wrap himself up in the tattered wrapper, which becomes more and more torn, as his extended legs touch it : at a subsequent stage, finding it impossible for him to stand the onslaught of shivering cold he moves from corner to corner.[20] This is too deep for tears, since it brings into light in a clear manner the sorrow experienced by the common man, who has no house to provide him shelter nor any garment to properly clothe himself up. The poet himself realises possibly these agonies, and in his search for a suitable shelter, he is astounded to see that the masses share his poverty to an equal extent. The intensity of the poet's feeling naturally makes the image most attractive : and what is more interesting here is that in the difficulties of the poet and the traveller, the common reader also finds his own difficulties, as a result of which, he gets an opportunity of savouring his ownself. To Kālidāsa the winter appears as one beloved of the ladies in which the feeling of love becomes exuberant and passionate ladies pass their times in different ways. The poet of lesser eminence is not struck so much by the mode of life of passionate ladies as by that of the cattle, the monkey, the poor and the common cultivator. Thus in presenting an image of this season, poet Śatānada draws the attention of the reader to the change experienced by the animal world as a whole, which as he says, shivers in biting cold. The monkey trembles,—the cow chews the cud, shaking all the while,—the domesticated dog prefers to live inside the oven,—the poor, having no garment to clothe himself contracts his limbs like the tortoise. The image takes the reader atonce to the hut of the commoner, where the dog experiences heat of the blown-out oven,—the cow enjoys joy of chewing cud, trembling all along ; and the householder himself shivers in biting cold and contracts his limbs as far as possible. But winter has its charms also. Not only does it bring in misery to the common man : but it brings prosperity to the cultivator, and thereby to the village as well, because it is in winter that the houses of the agriculturists remain packed up with paddy and molasses. An anonymous poet describes this change, experieneed by the village as a whole in winter : the houses of the agriculturists display a prosperous look by stacks of paddy,—the ripening of other corns gives a new look to the field,—the machines for crushing the sugar-cane are operated by the bulls, which revolve in a rhythmic manner ; and as this operation takes place, the entire surrounding becomes surcharged with fragrance of the molasses. Another poet Bāṇa draws our attention to the profound joy experienced by newly-wed couple, who take their shelter in a closed room, heated by the burning oven, and enjoys at the same time the heat of the thick quilt. The images presented by these common poets therefore, take us from the royal palace to the sun-lit field,—from the brilliance of nature to the depth of human heart,—from the experiences of the upper society to the lower strata. The skeleton of the image, introduced in the Mahābhārata continues to exist, but new flesh and blood are imparted to the dry bone of the image, as a result of which it appears in a full-bodied form : as the outlook of the poet changes, the nature of the image also undergoes substantial-modification.

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[19] Tīkṣṇaṃ ravistapati nīca ivācirāḍhyaḥ
Śṛṅgaṃrurustyajati mitramivākṛtajñaḥ /
Toyaṃ prasīdati muneriva dharmacintā
Kāmī daridra iva śoṣamupaiti paṅkaḥ //
—sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page-351, Verse-1313.

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[20] Puṇyāgnou pūrṇavāñchaḥ prathamamagaṇitaploṣadoṣaḥ pradoṣe
Pānthastaptvā prasuptaḥ pratatatanutṛṇe dhāmani grāmadevyāḥ /
Utkampī karpaṭārdhe jarati padahaticchidrite cchinnanidro
Vāte vāti prakāmaṃ himakaṇini kaṇankoṇataḥ koṇameti //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page—360, Verse—1344.

III

Wonder of the Mount

Another example of a Mahābhārata image budding into the career of a splendid painting and ultimately receiving a twist at the hands of poets'of lesser importance is furnished by the description of the Himālaya, as drawn by Vyāsa. Bhagīratha proceeds to the mountain Himālaya to practise an austere penance and Vyāsa pounces upon this opportunity of drawing a description of the charming lord of mountains. The Himālaya bears a number of peaks shining with different metals of diverse hues : the clouds carried by breeze embrace these peaks : the mountain is ornamented with groves grown on the banks of rivers and palaces, and its caves are inhabited by tigers and lions. The chirping birds, giving out various notes and the bees along with the peacocks and the swans give mountain a new look, in which the music of the universe is heard as it were. There are pleasing lakes and settlements in the mountain : these lakes are packed up with lotus-plants, where the cranes cackle in profound joy and the settlements are inhabited by the nymphs and the semi-divine beings. The quarter elephants rub their rugged shoulders on the mighty trees, as a result of which these tremble,—the serpents emitting poison move to and fro with tongue shining in greed,—and the semi-divine beings move hither and thither in quest of shining jewels. The mountain in some places presents the shining character of gold,—in other places the whiteness of silver makes itself realised,—and in yet another place the darkness of collyrium is traced. The Himālaya presenting the beauty of gold, silver and collyrium in a single volume thus casts astonishment in the mind of Vyāsa, and this sense of astonishment is intended to be transfered by him to the mind of the reader ; and the whole image is modelled with this purpose of stirring wonder in the minds of receptive readers.[21] Elsewhere Vyāsa presents the description of Gandhamādana ; and there also the same technique is adopted. The Gandhamādana bears splendid grove on its top, which puts an end of the pride of the celestial-grove even : the slopes of this mountain are characterised by the existence of lakes, rich in lotus-beds, in which the black bees recline in perfect joy, as the quail, the swan, the crane and the hen swim freely in the lake. The peacocks dance in the grove, extending their plume and give an expression to their appreciation of the charm of nature by their sweet notes.

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[21] Śṛṅgairbahuvidhākārairdhātumadbhiralaṃkṛtam /
Pavanālambibhir meghaiḥ pariṣiktaṃ samantataḥ //
Nadikuñjanitambaiśca prāsādairupaśobhitam /
Guhākandarasaṃlīnasimhavyāghraniṣevitam //
Śakunaiśca vicitrāṅgaiḥ kūjadbhirvividhā giraḥ /
Bhṛṅgarājaistathā haṃsairdātyūhairjalakukkuṭaiḥ //
Kinnarairapsarobhiśca niṣevitaśilātalam /
Digvāraṇaviṣāṇāgraiḥ samantād dhṛṣṭapādapam //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 108th Chapter, Verses—5, 6, 7, 10

On the peaks of the mountain flowers resembling the beauty of molten gold blossom in their fullness, and seem to supply suitable shafts to Cupid,—the god of love. Some flowers possess the charm of forest-fire,—some display the beauty of collyrium while others exhibit the splendour of the sapphire. The crane, the bee, the cuckoo, the parrot, the elephant,—all these combine to give the mountain as charming a look as possible : and in this attempt they are joined by the semi-divine beings like the Gandharva and the Kinnara. At some places the mountain bears the colour of collyrium, at some places that of gold ; and as the rays of the setting sun are reflected on its peaks of metals, the peaks shine and present the picture of a piece of evening cloud, tinged by the crimson rays of the sun. Here also the great astonishment experienced by the poet at the sight of the beautiful mountain is communicated to the reader through an image, in which the object-element predominates. As a matter of fact Vyāsa in most cases remains neutral and simply presents the objective truth in all its richness : but the simple touch of his poetic intuition makes the truth rich, as a result of which it creates an impression on the receptive reader, who shares the feeling of wonder with the poet. The same technique is adopted in the painting of the mountain Meru, where Arjuna is described as engaged in meditation in order to win over the favour of lord Śiva. The mountain, crowded with trees shining in flowers causes delight to Arjuna, as the heavenly region gives joy to the Gods : the slopes of this mountain are reverberated with the notes of the peacocks and the swans and are embellished by the charm of the flowers. Lakes, rich in lotus-beds, with the swan and the crane playing in them,—the pleasure spots, rich in charming jewels,—and the trees, shining in flowers in full blossom cause the mountain to imitate the beauty of the capital of Kuvera,—the lord of riches. The slopes of the mountain bear a mumber of herbs, which emit light, as a result of which it becomes difficult to draw the line of demarcation between the day time and the night in the region of the mount Meru.[22] Here also Vyāsa does not try to give expression to his personal moods : his total energy is expended in bringing into full relief the superb beauty of the mount, but here it must be admitted to his credit that he attains a brilliant success. As the refined-reader gets himself acquainted with the image, he is struck so to say to see supreme charm of the mountain, as a result of which his stupified-mind experiences astonishment and prepares itself for an unique confrontation with the grace of the self. Vyāsa's simple descriptions thus are highly powerful, since they are able to arrest the attention of the reader, whose mind becomes free from mundane prepossessions, as a result of which he easily experiences the bliss associated with his own being. But the individuality of Vyāsa, his personal moods and feelings do not reveal itself in the image, as a result of which the creation lacks in that lyricism, which is regarded as essential to all poetry.

The mountain gets an aesthetic appreciation from the hands of Kālidāsa, who devotes as many as sixteen stanzas in the beginning of his Kumārasaṃbhavam to a description of the Himālaya. The great king of mountains,—the Himālaya, animated by deity stands as the measuring-rod of the earth : it causes the earth to milk out glittering jewels and great herbs instructed by Pṛthu : the snow does not put an end to the beauty of this source of endless jewels. On its peak there are red minerals, that induce the coquetry and decoration of nymphs under a mistaken idea of the approach of evening. In this mountain the barks of Bhurja-trees with characters written on them with red minerals fluid become a useful instrument of Vidyādhara-fairies in their amorous correspondence. At night the resplendent herbs shining in the interior of the caves serve as the lamps without oil during the love sports of mountainers with their consorts. The mountain protects from the sun the darkness adhering to its caves ; afraid, as it were, of the day : its breeze, changed with particles of water-fall of the Ganges by which large Devadāru is shaken and the peacock's feathers used by hunters as girdles are agitated is enjoyed by the fowlers, running after the antelopes. The sun revolving below the Himālaya causes to open by rays shooting upwards the lotuses growing in lake over it,—the lotuses, which remain after being plucked by the hands of seven seers.[23] The foundation to this image is furnished by the description of the Himālaya, as given by Vyāsa, but the poetic mind of Kālidāsa, surcharged with profoundity of feeling finds out the connection which the mountain has with the actions and passions of the human world. Kālidāsa's Himālaya serves more as an excitent factor : it serves as the background of amorous-sports taking place between the semi-divine couples. But the Himālaya of Kālidāsa is not simply related to the actions and passions of human and semi-divine beings : it is ensouled by a deity, and having entered the eastern and the western seas stands as the measuring rod of the earth. The keynote of the Himālaya is contained in the statement that it is ensouled by deity, and that it serves as the controller of ancient Indian culture. It is this realisation of a soul in the mountain, that gives the image of Kālidāsa a peculiar Kālidāsian flavour, since this prince of Indian poet, being influenced by the speculations of the seers of the Upaniṣads traces the existence of the Supreme being in the rich mountain, the blue sky, the round ocean, the twinkling star, the shining moon, the rising sun,—as also in the mind of man. This realisation enable him to regard the universe as an association, in which all the members are mutually related to one another,—to listen, as a matter of fact, to the concert of the universe.

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[22] Taṃ pādapaiḥ puṣpadharairupetaṃ nagottamaṃ prāpya
mahārathānām /
Manaḥprasādaḥ paramo babhūva yathā divaṃ prāpya
marudgaṇānām //
Anekavarṇaiśca sugandhibhiśca mahādrumaiḥ saṃtata
mabhrajālaiḥ /
Tapaḥpradhānāḥ satataṃ carantaḥ śṛṅgaṃ gireści
ntayituṃ na śekuḥ //
Svatejasā tasya nagottamasya mahouṣadhīnāṃ ca tathā prabhāvāt /
Vibhaktabhāvo na babhūva kaścidahoniśānāṃ puruṣapravīra //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 164th Chapter, Verses—3, 7, 8

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[23] Astyuttarasyāṃ diśidevatātmā himālayonāma nagādhirājaḥ /
Pūrvāparou toyanidhī vagāhya sthitaḥ pṛthivyāḥ iva mānadaṇḍaḥ //
Anantaratnaprabhavasya yasya himaṃ na saubhāgya vilopi jātam /
Eko hi doṣo guṇasannipāte nimajjatindoḥ kiraneṣvivāṅkaḥ //
Vanecarāṇāṃ vanitāsakhānāṃ darīgṛhotsaṅganiṣaktabhāsaḥ /
Bhavanti yatrauṣadhayo rajanyāmatailapurāḥ suratapradīpāḥ //
Saptarṣihastāvacitāvaśeṣānyadho vivasvān parivarttamānaḥ /
Padmāni yasyāgrasaroruhāṇi prabodhayatyurdhamukhairmayūkhaiḥ //
—Kumārasambhava, Verses—1,3,10,16,

The presentation of the mountain as an animated one receives attention of the poet of lesser importance, who also cognises the inanimate collection of stone as one throbing and pulsating with life, but his new approach to life and nature prompts him to find faults with renowned mountains rather than to shower profuse praises on them. The poet Dāmodara thus entreats to the mountain Kailāsa not to feel proud of the fact that it is inhabited by lord Śiva : it is to bear in mind an equally important fact that it was once raised by the single hand of infuriated Rāvaṇa like a toy.[24] The tendency tracable here is the tendency to express the weakness of the rich and the established, who usually sleep over their faults and are lulled into a false sense of prestige and pride. It is perfectly clear that the poet has started to express doubt as the benign nature of the moral law,—which is supposed to control the course of events in the universe. This suspicion finds a more clear expression in the image presented by Kāmadeva, who considers the mount Mandara as one of the poor masses impoverished by persons belonging to the upper strata of the society. The mountain Mandara makes a great sacrifice by allowing the Gods to utilise it as the churning rod at the time of churing of the ocean : but it is surprising to note that at the time of distribution of the wealth produced, Mandara is deprived of its due share. Lord Viṣṇu accepts Lakṣmī,—lord Śiva conducts the lunar digit to his forehead,—Indra gains possession over the prince of elephant : but the mountain, which is regarded by courtesy as the store-house of all jewels and the refuge of lesser mountains receives nothing.[25] The image strikes the reader not so much by the beauty of the mountain or the richness of the gods associated with its churning as by the tone of the poet, who casts a sarcastic fling at the existing state of things, and refuses to regard the universe as a cosmos. This attitude develops gradually and is soon transformed into the modern trend, that is characterised by disbelief, dissatisfaction and urge for revolution. This trend reveals itself in vernacular compositions : and poets like Dāmodara and Kāmadeva definitely pave path for the appearance of the vernacular poets, charged with dissatisfaction and disbelief in the literary field. These poets therefore, serve as the link between the poets of renown in the field of Sanskrit literature and the modern vernacular poets, and consequently their creations deserve more attention that what has hitherto been given to them. Taking the cue from the Mahābhārata image, these poets build up such a painting, which transfuses discontent and disbelief to the receptive reader, but nevertheless the slender frame of the image of Vyāsa is tracable in it. This history of the evolution of the image is of perennial interest to the student of Indian literature.

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[24] Kailāsa re paśupatisthitipātramātra
Samrūḍhagarvamiha parvata saṃtyajāśu /
Dṛṣṭosi kiṃ nahi salilasamutthitaika
Poulastyahastakamalopari puṣkarābhaḥ //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page—488, Verse—1801

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[25] Murārātirlakṣmīṃ tripuravijayī śītakiraṇam
Karīndraṃ poulomīpatirapi ca lebhe jalanidheḥ /
Tvayā kiṃ tallabdḥaṃ kathaya mathito mandaragire
Śaraṇyaḥ śailānāṃ yadayamadayaṃ ratnanilayaḥ //
—Sadukti-karṇāmṛta, Page—488, Verse—1802..

CHAPTER—VI

MAN THROUGH THE AGES

I

Fire of the Furious

The seer of the Mahābhārata betrays his keen power of observation of nature: with meticulous care he draws miniature-painting of the round ocean, the blue sky, the shining grove, the splendid stream, as also the gruesome battle-field. But this is not all. He displays at the same time his profound knowledge of human heart, which takes numerous forms, being visited by myriad sentiments. Man, after all, is a bundle of feelings, some of which reside in the form of latent impressions in his mind, and some are fleeting in character, appearing in and disappearing from the mental-plane of the human being from time to time. Of these feelings again some are pleasant, giving rise to joy in the mind of the experiencer, while some are unpleasant ones, leading the comprehender to experience sorrow. Vyāsa knows the working of feelings belonging to both these types: he is thoroughly conversant with the changes through which the pleasant feelings manifest themselves, as also throught which the unpleasant ones indicate their emergence. The Mahābhārata thus contains the painting of the dawning of love for the first time in the human heart,—the experience of grief on account of loss of the beloved or the endeared,—the sense of frustration springing from this,—the experience of ultimate indignation on this account, and so on. But being a composition of an early age, it records faithfully the feelings and the moods, without attempting to hide the unpleasant ones, like hatred and indignation under the cover of pleasing expressions. This reflects the state of society to a considerable extent, which is free from hypocrisy and the attempt to present the base feelings under the garb of the beautiful.

Vyāsa therefore, moves quickly from the land of nature to the arena of human heart, and his description of the latter is as faithful as that of the former. In drawing the painting of nature however, he does not intermingle the feelings of human heart with the external aspects of nature nor does he introduce the throbings and pulsatings of human heart in the background of nature. And this is so, because poetry is in its morning at the time of Vyāsa, who is out to compose not only a specimen of literary art, but a compendium of poetry and politics, ethics and philosophy—all compressed in one volume. Philosophy and politics do not take into account the soft sentiment of human mind: philosophy appeals to the head alone, while politics does not recognise any such thing as love or affection. By presenting the painting of human heart in its different moods and implications, Vyāsa reveals his agreement with the doctrine that the feeling is of paramount importance in poetry, and end of which is represented by attainment of emotive experience; but poetry, philosophy and politics, not being divided into separate water-tight compartments in his time, he allows poetry to succumb to the onslaught of politics and philosophy from time to time. This explains the incorporation of that portion in the Mahābhārata which appeals more to head than to the heart.

Draupadī experiences great difficulties in the Dvaitavana, where she moves with five Pāṇḍava brothers. Unlike Sītā she does not accept her lot in good grace,—does not feel that the company of her husband alone is in a position to convert the unpleasant into the pleasant,—sorrow into joy: unlike Sītā she bursts forth in frustration, which soon yields place to indignation. As the Pāṇḍava brothers leave the capital for the forest, all the heroes of the Kourava camp to the exclusion of Duryodhana, Karṇa, Śakuni and Duḥśāsana shed tears: this cruel behaviour of Duryodhana and his associates leaves a permanent wound in the heart of one-time queen Draupadī. She laments the sad lot of Yudhiṣṭhira, who having rested on soft couches before is compelled to sleep in the forest on a sheet of Kuśa grass. Yudhiṣṭhira is no longer surrounded by rulers of states : brahmins no longer approach him for gifts : fine dishes are no more prepared by cooks ; and all this takes away peace from her. This sense of frustration is replaced soon by indignation : and Vyāsa hurries to draw a painting of Draupadī's heart burning in anger, which manifests itself through invectives and abuses hurled at the chief Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira. Why does not Yudhiṣṭhira, she asks fly into a rage seeing Bhīmasena doing all the jobs himselfand experiencing profound sorrow ? Why does not he experience sorrow and indignation seeing the plight of Arjuna, the one-time-vanquisher of foes in the battle-field. Draupadī feels sorry for the simple fact that Yudhiṣṭhirasleeps overthe lamentable lot of Arjuna, as also the pitiable condition of her ownself. It is really strange that seeing his own wife, the daughter-in-law of the great Pāṇḍu and the sister of Dhṛṣṭadyumna ploding her weary way in the forest tracts, Yudhiṣṭhira remains unperlexed and unagitated. It is equally strange to see him unnerved at the sight of Nakula and Sahadeva, the two incarnations of beauty and love for ease getting injuries in their toes through movement in the forest-region. These thoughts perturb Draupadī to such an extent that she soon censures Yudhiṣṭhira by employing most harsh expressions : no where is seen a Kṣatriya devoid of anger, since it is his duty to protect the injured humanity from the onslaught of mischief-mongers : by allowing the mischief-monger to exploit peaceful citizen, Yudhiṣṭhira really acts in a manner not befitting a Kṣatriya, and consequently he deserves condemnation. In the conflict between the right to live peacefully in this splendid world and the right to own private property, Yudhiṣṭhira has allowed the latter to prevail over the former, which represents, as a matter of fact, the Absolute value.

This injury inflicted by Yudhiṣṭhira on the Absolute Value annoys Draupadī so much so that, he chastises her consort in a most ruthless manner, which seems a bit unusual for a loving wife. But the Mahābhārata being a composition of the morning of the human society, Draupadī does not hide her feelings, but expresses the conflict of jealousy and love, affection and hatred, sorrow and indignation in a straight way employing a language, competent to give a clear expression to all this.[1]

Another example of Vyāsa's dexterity in drawing a painting of human heart is represented by the Strīvilāpaparvan, containing the lamentations of Gāndhārī at the end of the first phase of the great Kurukṣetra tragedy. Gāndhārī representing the flame of motherly conscience of Bhārata moves alone in battle-field, strewn with bone and marrow,—flesh and blood of the millions of warriors, experiencing unlimited sorrow for the heroes of both sides. Her mind flies back to the days of grandeur of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, when they found themselves in the pinnacle of royal glory and fortune. Roaming in the past days of imperial fortune, Gāndhārī brings out the contrast between the glorious past and the pitiable present; and presentation of this contrast through suitable expressions becomes too deep for tears. Those heroes of both the sides who in past were aroused from their slumber by beautifully singing bards are now listening to the shrill notes of jackals,—those who used to repose on soft couches are now constrained to roll on hard earth. The lamentations of the ladies, widowed recently moisten the eyes of Gāndhārī : and she describes it as the most unbearable incident, fallen on her lot owing to a sin accrued in previous birth.[2] The attempt to create pathos by offering a sharp contrast between this splendid past and the lamentable present is noticed in a more pronounce manner in the observations of Gāndhārī on seeing the dead Kaurava chief Duryodhana. In past Duryodhana used to move in front of fighting kings : now he is compelled to lie on dust : that Duryodhana who in past was waited upon by charming damsels is now being attended to by inauspicious jackals : the imperial monarch, who used to enjoy the entire earth unopposed is now lying dead on earth, besmeared with the blood of dead warriors. The affectionate heart of Gāndhārī bursts forth, as it were, to see the end of Duryodhana, which is too deep for tears.[3] Like Duryodhana Bhīṣma also is seen lifeless and still : and the sight of this dead warrior unfolds once again before Gāndhārī the gates of the splendid past, and allows her to ruminate over the sweet memories of the bygone days. That Bhīṣma who was unrivalled in prowess and bravery is lying slain in the battle-field : that great warrior whose lotus-feet were daily honoured by fighters and bards is now loosing his limbs one by one by being drawn by jackals and vultures.[4] Throughout this section Vyāsa tries to stimulate apprehension and abhorrence, lying in the form of latent impressions in the minds of refined-readers ; and through these he ultimately tries to awaken the Quietistic lying equally in a dormant state in their mental-plane. The technique adopted by him in presenting the feelings of annoyed Draupadī and lamenting Gāndhārī is more or less the same. Draupadī starts from dejection and sorrow and ultimately accuses Yudhiṣṭhira of cowardice and unprincely behaviour. Gāndhārī starts by opening her bleeding heart to Kṛṣṇa, but she also ends by pronouncing a terrible curse on the Great lord,—the chief architect of the Bhārata Tragedy. Pronouncing this terrible curse she says that like her ownself Kṛṣṇa will lose all his friends, relations and advisers and will be compelled some day to meet with a ignoble death, which does not befit a fighter : that day all the ladies of his family will weep in the same manner in which the ladies of the Kauravas are shedding tears.[5] Kṛṣṇa seems to be prepared for this curse : he accepts it absolutely unagitated, because he knows that the machinery of destruction once let loose ultimately kills the operator of the machinery and does not stop without annihilating the Chief architect. By presenting the perfect composure with which Kṛṣṇa accepts the curse, Vyāsa gives expression to this philosophy, but what is more important from the point of poetry is his skill in diving deep into the fathoms of human heart, and ultimately in giving expression to the myriad moods playing in that region. And if the test of a great poet lies in this skill, then Vyāsa certainly ranks as one among the greatest poets, capable of being rivalled only by the great Vālmīki.

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[1] Dhyāyataḥ kiṃ na manyuste prāpte kāle vivardhate /
Bhīmasenaṃ hi karmāṇisvayaṃ kurvāṇamanyutam //
Taṃ te vanagataṃ dṛṣṭvā kasmānmanyurna vardhate /
Ayaṃ kurūn raṇe sarvān hantumutsahate prabhuḥ //
Dhyāyantamarjunaṃ dṛṣṭvā kasmād rājan na kupyasi /
Dṛṣṭvā vanagataṃ pārthamaduḥkhārhaṃ sukhocitam //
Aduḥkhārhou manuṣyendra kasmānmanyurna vardhate /
Drupadasya kule jātāṃ snuṣāṃ pāṇḍormahātmanaḥ //
Dhṛṣṭadyumnasya bhaginīṃ vīrapatnīmanuvratām /
Māṃ vai vanagatāṃ dṛṣṭvā kasmāt kṣamasi pārthiva //
Na nirmanyuḥ kṣatriyo' stiloke nirvacanam smṛtaṃ /
Tadadya tvayi paśyāmi kṣatriye viparītavat //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva 27th Chapter Verses—21, 23, 27, 34, 35, 37

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[2] Ito duḥkhataraṃ kiṃ nu keśava pṛatibhāti me /
Yadimāḥ kurvate sarvā ravamuccāvacaṃ striyaḥ //
Nūnamācaritaṃ pāpaṃ mayā pūrveṣu janmasu /
Yā paśyāmi hatān putrān poutrān bhrātṝṃśca mādhava //
—Mahābhārata, strīparva, Chapter 16th Verses—59, 60.

[3] Niḥsapatnā mahī yasyā trayodaśa samāḥ sthitā /
Sa śete nihato bhūmou putra me pṛthivīpatiḥ //
Kathaṃ tu śatadhā nedaṃ hṛdayaṃ sama dīryate /
Paśyantyā nihataṃ putraṃ putreṇa sahitaṃ raṇe //
—Mahābhārata, Strīvilāpaparva, Chapter 17th Verses—21 and 27.

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[4] Vandanārhāvimou tasya bandibhirvanditou śubhou /
Gomāyavo vikarṣanti pādou śiṣyaśatārcitou //

—Mahābhārata, Strīvilāpaparva, Chapter 23rd Verse—33.

[5] Tavapyevaṃ hatasutā nihatajñātibāndhavāḥ /
Striyaḥ paripatisyanti yathaitā bharatastriyaḥ //

—Mahābhārata, Strīparva, Chapter 25th, Verse—46

Bhāravi of much later date, who derives the plot of his Kirātārjunīyam from the Mahābhārata, follows this technique of presenting the painting of human heart in its different moods, as also of creating a splendid effect by offering contrast between circumstances, in which the characters find themselves placed at different periods. The first canto of the Kirātārjunīyam contains a speech of Droupadī, which is described by the poet himself as one intended to stimulate indignation and heroism in peace-loving Yudhiṣṭhira. The conduct of Yudhiṣṭhira is absolutely unprincely in character : Droupadī being a lady should not have said anything on general administration, but the agony suffered by her tempts her to address the emperor,—the repository of cowardice. Droupadī is surprised to find that seeing his ownself stationed in unfavourable circumstances, the wrath of Yudhiṣṭhira does not blaze like fire, burning within the Śamītree. A man devoid of indignation is really looked down upon by men ; and nobody cares either to befriend or to antagonise him. That Bhīma, whose body was once anointed by sandle-paste is now covered with dust,—those Nakula and Sahadeva who use to lie on valuable and costly bed are now sleeping on hard earth,—that imperial ruler who once used to give up his slumber on listening to the sweet notes of poets basking under the sun-shine of royal favour is now leaving his bed, made of Kuśa grass, after listening to the shrill and inauspicious notes of jackals : in past he used to partake of dainty dishes after offering them to the twice-born ; but alas now he is constrained to live upon the forest-fruits, easily available from the land of nature ; that king whose feet used to touch the crowns of the waiting-princes is now treading on blades of Kuśa-grass which cause a cut on his toes. By bringing out this contrast Droupadī wants to awaken indignation in Yudhiṣṭhira : consequently, she tenders advice to him to give up the spirit of Quietism and to get himself prepared for annihilation of enemies, because love for peace befits a sage and not a paramount monarch[6]. Though Droupadī adopts the Mahābhārata technique of presenting contrast, she does not give expression to her feelings in a naked manner,—nor does he admonish Yudhiṣṭhira by employing harsh expressions : she tenders advice in the sweet manner of the beloved, and the speech employed by her does not wound the feelings of the person addressed in any way. This shows that the society has advanced to a considerable degree from the war-like age of the Mahābhārata to the refined period of Bhāravi : and that women have grown more loving, confining themselves more to the house-hold then to the battle-field and another external spheres. But nevertheless the techniquc adopted by Vyāsa is tracable in the advice employed by Bhāravi, and the discerning mind does not miss the link in the paintings of human heart from Vyāsa down to the poets of post-Kālidāsa period.

The art of presenting feelings through the medium of simple and straight language gradually yields place to the technique of heaping up poetic-figure upon poetic figure ; and the extreme employment of this technique often stifles the throat of emotion to such an extent that the creation appeals simply to the head, and not to the heart. Vyāsa prefers to present the indignation, frustration and heroism of Droupadī in a straight and pointed manner through the medium of simple language : but poets of posterity try to draw an image of joy or sorrow,—peace or frustration,—love or indignation, as the case may be, in a different manner. The poet Vasukalpa, whose composition finds a place in the Saduktikarṇāmṛta of Śrīdharadāsa thus says that as the imperial ruler moves on his hilarious march, the host of rival kings loses its property, food, weapon, land, army and valour and ultimately retires to the forest-tracts.[7] The poet uses simple language no doubt, but the expressions are in position to bring into light the graded valour of the imperial rules, as well as the graded terror of the rival kings,—both of which gather in volumes step by step. Another similar illustration is furnished by the poetical image of Jayadeva in which rival kings are described as receiving lessons on the art of flattery, partaking morsels of grass in the forest-tracts, setting up camps in mountaineous regions and offering salutations to the imperial ruler on listening to his victorious march.[8] Here the technique adopted by the poet gives rise to the poetic figure hyperbole, which is supposed to constitute the foundation of all poetic-figures. The departure from the Mahābhārata method is easily tracable. While Vyāsa in most cases allows the truth to stand alone resplendent in its own light these poets introduce new truths from outside, because they think that the truth presented in poetry stands in need of being ornamented by some other truth. Adopting the same technique prince Divākara who also ranks among the poets of lesser importance describes the pitiable plight of rival rulers in a remarkable stanza. Being desirous of presenting the powers of the paramount monarch, Divākara says the rival kings, being tormented by the heat of the prowess of the imperial ruler retire to the forest : but there also the young lions imitate the valour of the monarch, causing fear in the minds of the refugees, who naturally being nervous think of shifting to a safer zone. But alas ! no such safer zone is available near at hand.[9] This miniature-painting deserves consideration because though the intention of the poet is to bring into light the prowess of his patron, the nervousness experienced by the antagonists of the ruler is introduced nonetheless, because the poet thinks that valour is brought into full relief, when presented in the background of apprehension of the antagonists. The poet feels sorry for the rival rulers, who do not experience peace of mind even in the mountain-peaks, but at the sametime a sarcastic fling is hurled at the kings who are characterised by total absence of valour and prowess. The admixture of valour and cowardice,—of grief and sarcasm thus lends a special charm to the word-painting of Divākara. This is characteristic of the new age in which the poet, gradually develops the habit of experiencing uneasiness and peacelessness at the existing order of things. Some poets of this new age however remain contented with high-flights of imagination alone : and instead of seeing things from the new angle, they take recourse to hyperbolic statements, collecting figures upon figures in course of their assertions. The poetaster Hanumāna thus fancies the valour of Rāma as a veritable lamp : it has for its stand the large tortoise supporting the earth, for its base the entire earth, for its oil the four oceans, and for its wick the brilliant golden-mountain : as this lamp of prowess blazes, the insects in the shape of antagonistic kings put an end to their own lives by plunging into the fire.[10] The difference between the two images is clearly tracable : while Divākara's image is over-flowing with moods and feelings, Hanumāna's painting is full of metaphor, which is drawn to its logical extreme in such a way that the emotional-mood clings rather perilously to the poetic texture.

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[6] Purādhirūḍhaḥ śayanaṃ mahādhanaṃ vibodhyase yaḥ
stutigītimaṅgalaiḥ /
Adabhradarbhāmadhiśayya sa sthatīṃ jahāsi nidrāmaśivaiḥ
śivārutaiḥ //
Puropanītaṃ nṛpa rāmaṇīyakaṃ dvijātiśeṣeṇayadetadandhasā /
Tadadya te vanyaphalāśinaḥ paraṃ paraiti kārśyaṃ yaśasā
samaṃ vapuḥ //
Vihāya śāntiṃ nṛpa dhāma tatpunaḥ prasīda saṃdhehi
vadhāya vidviṣāṃ /
Vrajanti śatrūnavadhūya niḥspṛhāḥ śamena siddhiṃ
munayo na bhūbhṛtaḥ //
—Kirātārjunīyam, Canto I, Verses—38, 38, 42

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[7] Deve nirbharasāhasaikarasike niḥśaṅkaviredhunā
Niḥsīmaprasare niraṅkuśamatau jñāte manāṅ nirdaye /
Niḥsampatti nirāyudhaṃ niraśanaṃ nirbhūmi niḥsainikam /
Nistejaśca nirāśrayaṃ ca nikhilaṃ tadrājakaṃ vartate //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse—1461

[8] Śikṣante cāṭuvādānvidadhati yavasānāśane kānaneṣu /
Bhrāmyanti jyākināṅkaṃ vidadhati śiviraṃ kurvate parvateṣu //
Abhyasyanti praṇāmaṃ tvayi calati camūcakravikrāntibhāji
Prāṇatrāṇāya deva tvadarinṛpatayaścakrire kārmaṇāni //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse—1465

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[9] Deva tvattatpratāpajvalanakavalitā sarvatŏ dahyamānai-
raṅgairyuktaṃ
Yadete himagiriśikharotsaṅgamīyurnarendrāḥ /
Kiṃ tu tvacchouryalilāmanuharati puraḥ simhayūnāṃ nikāye
Tatrāpyātaṅkabhājaḥkva nanu vidhihatāḥ sthairyamāsādayanti //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse-1474.

II

Radiance of the soft

Not only do unpleasant sentiments receive recognition from Vyāsa : he displays his equal skill in depiction of the fine emotional moods, which also develop in the human mind. The conflict of duty and affection,—of shame and love,—of indignation and attachment—all this is nicely presented by the composer of the Mahābhārata, who exercises tremendous influence on later poets in respect of employment of this art. Before the actual battle fought between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, Kuntī experiences great dejection, because as she knows, Karṇa is invincible in war, and there is no escape from him. Her heart quivers at the thought of annihilation of her sons by Karṇa. After sleepless consideration for the whole night she decides to approach Karṇa in the morning, when he usually takes his ablution in the Ganges. Kuntī does accordingly : on completion of his rites,Karṇa marks the presence of the lady and asks her to narrate the cause of her arrival. And this gives an opportunity to Kuntī to narrate the whole life-history of Karṇa, who actually is her son, born in maidenhood. She requests her eldest son to leave the side of the Kouravas and join Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna and enjoy royal glory, grasped through the valour of Arjuna and policies of Yudhiṣṭhira. The epithet Sūtaputra, applied to Karṇa, she says troubles her most, because he happens to be the eldest of thePāṇḍavas. But Karṇa is fixed in his determination. He accuses his mother of rejecting him immediately after birth through shame ; and paises Duryodhana for maintaining his honour and prestige by alloting him a place in the throne of the Aṅga state. It does not behave him, he says, to leave the side of Duryodhana at this critical stage and join the Pāṇḍavas in their armed-conflict of Kouravas. But nevertheless he assures his mother that he will spare the lives of Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva ; and will enter into fight with Arjuna alone. The mother need not worry, because if Arjuna is slain, she will have her fifth son in Karṇa, and if Karṇa is slain she will continue to be bathed in affection of Arjuna[11]. This utterance becomes too deep for tears : and Kuntī actually falls into a swoon, praying for welfare of her ill-fated son Karṇa. This analysis of the scene shows Vyāsa's grand conception of characters,—his superb skill in diving deep into the fathoms of human heart.

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[10] Kūrmaḥ pādosya yaṣṭirbhujagapatirasou bhājanaṃ bhūtadhātrī
Tailotpūrāḥ samudrāḥ kanakagirirayaṃ vṛttavartiprarohaḥ /
Arciścaṇḍāṃśurocirgaganamalinimā kajjalaṃ dahyamānā
Śatruśreṇī pataṅgā jvalati raghupate tvatpratāpapradīpaḥ //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse—1476

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[11] Mayā plavena saṃgrāmaṃ titirṣanti duratyayam /
Apāre pārakāmā ye tyajeyaṃ tānahaṃ katham //
Na ca te'yaṃ samārambho mayi mogho bhaviṣyati /
Vadhyān viṣahyān saṃgrāme na haniṣyāmite sutān //
Yudhiṣṭhiraṃ ca bhīmaṃ ca yamou caivārjunādṛte /
Arjunena samaṃ yuddhamapi youdhiṣṭhire bale //
Na te jātu na siṣyanti putrāḥ pañca yaśasvini /
Nirarjunāḥ sakarṇā vā sārjunā vā hate mayi //
—Mahābhārata, Uddyogaparva, Chapter 146 Verses—14, 20. 21, 23.

and thereafter in presenting the conflict of moods detected. Karṇa is a victim to divided affections : he knows his duty to one-time saviour Duryodhana, but he is not forgetful of the obligations, which he is to discharge to his mother, even though she left him to his fate immediately after birth. Kuntī is a greater victim to divided affections : she is eager for the welfare of her recognised sons, but at the same time she does not want Karṇa, whom she obtained in her maiden-hood to perish in the bloody battle. She thinks over the matter and ultimately decides to approach her eldest son with the request. The son fails to act according to the desires of his mother : but he recognises her as his own mother, and promises to fill the vacuum, likely to be caused by the death of Arjuna. The recognition extended by the disowned son Karṇa moistens the eyes of Kuntī, who experiences a complete emotional set-back, and falls into a swoon. Vyāsa's power of presenting complexities in human character reveals itself to its highest degree in this scene, introducing the dialogue between Karṇa and Kuntī.

Vyāsa treats of the soft sentiment of love in the Epic, but being in a heroic age, he introduces love as one springing from the hunger of the body, urging the lover to benefit his or her ownself rather than look to the comforts of the beloved. Love that arises from the considerations of the body receives recognition at the hands of Vyāsa, who thus expends his energies in presenting love in its complete grossness. The coarse character of the love is rendered all the more gruesome by consideration of self interest, so nakedly given expression to the lovers. An example of this is furnished by the episode of Duṣmanta and Śakuntalā, which suggests the source of Abhijñānaśakuntalam to Kālidāsa. The paramount monarch Duṣmanta is out on a hunting reaches the hermitage of Karṇa, packed up with a number of birds and beasts and pleasing to a considerable extent through luxuriance of fruits and flowers. As the great ascetic is out of the hermitage in search of fruit, his daughter Śakuntalā receives the ruler, who is charmed to see the physical charm of Śakuntalā, and proposes to marry her through the Gandharva-form of marriage. The condition which is imposed by the ascetic-girl is of profound importance, since it throws much light on the attitude of one of the parties to love towards the other party. Śakuntalā is agreeable to the proposal of Duṣmanta, but she lays down a condition to the effect that the issue born of this marriage is to be installed in the throne of the state.[12] When Duṣmanta accepts the conditions stipulated by her, marriage between them is solemnized. Ultimately when Śakuntalā appears before the king in royal-court the king fails to recognise her, possibly to avoid public criticsm. When his newly-wed bride tries to revive his memories of the past he neither recognises the ascetic-girl as his wife nor does consider the issue born out of this marriage as a legitimate child, and consequently acceptable one. The words of Śakuntalā, who happens to be a daughter of the celestial courtesan Menakā, he says, are to be accepted with a grain of salt, because courtesans and their daughters are accustomed to deceive persons by seemingly sweet expression.[13] The observation of Duṣmanta causes indignation in Śakuntalā, who proceeds to expose the faults of the king and to bring into light the difference between her ownself, moving in the terrestrial region and the king roaming in the earthly one. At this moment a heavenly expression explains the royal state of things to all the members present in the royal assembly :

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[12] Satyaṃ me pratijānīhi yathā vakṣyāmyahaṃ rahaḥ /
Mayi jāyeta yaḥ putraḥ sa bhavet tvadanantaraḥ //
Yuvarājo mahārāja satyametat vravimi te /
Yadyetadevaṃ duṣmanta astu me saṅgamastvayā //
—Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, Chapter 73, Verses—16, 17

[13] Na putramabhijānāmi tvayi jātaṃ śakuntale /
Asatyavacanā nāryaḥ kaste śraddhāsyate vacaḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, Chapter 74, Verse—73

Duṣmanta no more hesitates to accept the ascetic-girl as his wife, who becomes glad to see her son coronated as the crown-prince of the state. An analysis to this episode shows the attitude of Vyāsa to love and life : he does not conceive of love as an undying flame, effecting union of hearts altogether, but rather as one springing from desire to enjoy, given rise to by self-love. As the motive behind the flow of love is the desire to satisfy ones cherished desires, so Śakuntalā does not hesitate to accept the proposal of the king by affixing a condition to it, and the king also does not hesitate to repudiate Śakuntalā in the open assembly.

In the episode of Nala and Damayantī, that forms the plot of Śrîharṣa's Naiṣadhacaritam, a similar attitude of the great seer is traced ; but here though springing from considerations of body and interest of the self, love is presented as struggling to be converted into a permanent power, effecting union between the lovers for all time to come. Nala, the son of Vîrasena listens to the qualities of Damayantî, the daughter of Bhīma,—a girl of unparalleled beauty and excellence, never born before in the earthly or the heavenly region. In a similar manner Damayantī listens to the charm and valour of Nala, who is described as cupid incarnate, moving in the form of the king in the earth. Both Nala and Damayantī feel attracted to each other. One day the passionate king catches hold of a swan, who requests the king to let it loose, because there are chances of his being benefitted by it. The swan promises to help the king in winning over the heart of the princess : and as the king actually sets it at liberty, it approaches the vicinity of the girl and praises the qualities of Nala, whose prospective wife is reported to be a lady of great fortune. This observation of the swan stimulates passion in Damayantī, who rejecting the offer of the Gods extended to her resolves to marry Nala, and finally chooses him as her consort. This act of Damayantī annoys Kali who decides to take a terrible revenge on the newly-married couple. Nala loses everything and retires to the forest with Damayantī : there also he is chased by Kali, who prompts him to leave Damayantī alone in that terrible region : the king falls a prey to the temptations of the annoyed deity and actually leaves Damayantī in the forest. Finding her husband absent, Damayantī laments bitterly, and here Vyāsa expends his powers in presenting the feelings and affections of the bleeding heart of the lover. Passing through many vicissitudes of fortune, the two lovers are ultimately united : the misunderstanding of Damayantī is removed and the two continue to live in perfect peace and happiness for years together. The lamentations of Damayantī and the anxious thoughts of Nala for the welfare of his beloved—all these go to show the depth of love, which is not surely confined within the limits of corporeal frame and conscious of the welfare of the self alone.[14] Vyāsa's treatment of love in Nala-Damayantī episode therefore is much more beautiful than that, as found in the Duṣmanta-Śakuntalā episode : Damayantī appers more as a loving wife, ready to share the joys and sorrows of her husband under all circumstances than Śakuntalā, who is out to bargain from the very beginning and does not hesitate to expose the failings of her lover in public.

This attitude to love receives a full-bodied form at the hands of Kālidāsa, who conceives of love as an undying flame causing union between the hearts of the lovers for all time to come. It is a fact that love springs from considerations of the body, because it requires actualities to feed upon, but very soon it transcends the limits imposed by the body and is transformed into supernormal unseen power, which knows no annihilation and death. Kālidāsa neither conceives of love as pure hunger of the body,—the urge for enjoyment nor does he envisage it as a cold ideal, removed far away from the ordinary empirical plane. To Kālidāsa love is not a simple dead ideal, moving high up in the firmament like the dry moon : it takes a concrete shape and plods in the ordinary earth. Consequently he takes the body and the soul together, and presents love as starting from the citadel of body, but soon leaving it and reaching the gateway of the soul. This philosophy of love prompts Kālidāsa to effect a pleasing change in the coarse narrative of the Mahābhārata by introducing the imprecation of Durvāsas. In the Mahābhārata Śakuntalā enters into a contract with the king : Kālidāsa's Śakuntalā appears like a coy-maiden, unable to enter conversation even with the king. The king of the Mahābhārata refuses to recognise Śakuntalā and her son for fear of public criticism and calumny, but the king of the Abhijñānaśakuntalam repudiates his newly-wed bride because his power of recollection is obstructed by the curse of of Durvāsā. When Śakuntalā first appears in the scene, Kālidāsa introduces her as a veritable creeper, and thereby draws the attention of the reader to her tremendous physical charm : when the same Śakuntalā appears in the last scene, she is presented as clad in dark garment, with her face emaciated owing to observance of the vow of chastity. The first union, effected through consideration of physical charm succumbs soon to the indignation of the irascible sage, but the second union, effected through spiritual love continues forever. This spiritual love knows no destruction : it burns permanently in the heart of the lover and continues to give peace and happinese to the beloved for all time to come. It is because of this that the exiled Yakṣa of the Meghadūta experiences delight when he thinks of her estranged consort, as stationed far from him in the city of Alakā. And when the cloud-messenger actually reaches the city he is astounded to see the beloved of the Yakṣa, attempting to play on the lute or engaged in conversation with the parrot or trying to paint an image of the separated lover.[15] All these attempts of the Yakṣa-vadhū go to substantiate the proposition of immortality of love, so lovingly cherished by Kālidāsa.

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[14] Evaṃ tu vilapantī sā rājño bhāryā mahātmanaḥ /
Anveṣamāṇā bhartāraṃ vane śvāpadasevite //
Unmattavad bhīmasutā vilapantī itastataḥ /
Hā hā rājanniti muhuritaścetaśca dhāvati //
Tāṃ krandamānāmatyarthaṃ kurarīmiva vāśatīm /
Karuṇaṃ bahu śocantīṃ vilapantīṃ muhurmuhuḥ //
—Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, Chapter 73, Verses—18, 19,20.

Love appears in its manifold aspects in the Amaruśataka, the miniature word-paintings in which are resplendent with the intensity of love in its diverse moods and implications. Amaru handles lyric-poetry in a masterly manner and produces the lyric-effect by intermingling his own passions and moods with the actions of the outer world. How love acts in the minds of lovers,—how do these lovers behave in different circumstances,—how do they become victim to opposite pulls of conflicting emotions,—and how does love bring solace and comfort to the man blazing through agony—all these are nicely presented by Amaru, the prince of poets of lyrical literature. Taking cue from Kālidāsa Amaru also describes love as immortal and indestructable, causing satisfaction, as also anguish to the lover under different circumstances. The joy of love is unbounded : the couple experiences a fine time immediately after entering into matrimonial alliance with each other : this time becomes usually full of many interesting episodes, which create a deep impression in the minds of both the parties to love. In describing one such incident, Amaru says, as the encaged parrot represents the conversation, that took place between the newly-wed bride and her consort on previous night before the respected superiors the next morning, the bride in order to put a stop to its notes places on its beaks emerald, suspended from her ears under the guise of a pome-granate.[16] The painting is unique in character, since it brings into light a conglomeration of love, bashfulness, anxiety and respect, all represented as being experienced by the single bride. But at times love brings agony to the lover also : as the beloved sets out for the distant land, the lady experiences tremendous grief : she bids farewell to the bangles : tears trickle down her cheeks : the heart eschiewes fortitude and decides to go along with the beloved : why then, the bride asks, the poor life does not leave the body in order to accompany the lover ?[17] The depth of effection is to be noted ; but what creates a lasting impression in the mind of the connoisseur is the great sense of disappointment, experienced by the girl, which manifests itself through the queer querry put to poor life. Not only is the wife doomed to stand the pang of separation : the husband experiences it in a similar manner, and sometimes a bit more. In presenting the image of such anguish, Amaru says : the traveller seeing the sky overcasts with clouds laments so bitterly at night, that all persons remaining in his vicinity drop the idea of going to a distant place, far away from their near and dear ones, and give up completely their sense of jealousy and indignation also.[18] The verse presents the sorrows of love, since love does not simply bring joy to the lover, but sorrow as well to him. This philosophy is inhereted by Amaru from Kālidāsa, who in his Kumārasambhavam and Abhijñānaśakuntalam describes both pleasures and sorrows of love is to proceed through many trials and tribulations, without which it cannot be purged of its base metals. This is just an extension of the theory that true love is to effect union of hearts, and that love is to be taken neither as divorced totally from body nor as separated absolutely from the airy soul. Continuing in this strain, Amaru describes the traveller as casting wistful glances on that direction, which is blessed by the presence of his beloved, even though he is separated from his consort by hundreds of cities, rivers and forest-tracts. The refined-reader realises the volume of sorrow experienced by the separated traveller, and as this sorrow appears to him to be a replica of his own grief, he savours delight.[19] This delight appears all the more, because once again he becomes assured of the immortalily of love, as also of its power to bring comfort and solace to the bleeding heart of the lover.

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[15] Āloke te nipatati purā sā valivyākulā vā
Matsādṛśyaṃ virahatanu vā bhāvagamyaṃ likhantī /
Pṛcchantī vā madhuravacanāṃ sārikāṃ pañjarasthāṃ
Kaccidbharttuḥ smarasi rasike tvaṃ hi tasya priyeti //
Utsaṅge vā malinabasane soumya nikṣipya bīṇāṃ
Matgotrāṅkaṃ viracitapadaṃ geyamudugātukāmā /
Tantrīrmādrāṃ nayanasalilaiḥ sārayitvā kathañcid
Bhūyobhūyaḥ svayamapi kṛtāṃ mūrcchanāṃ vismarantī //
—Meghadūtam, Verses—88, 90.

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[16] Dampatyorniśi jalpatorguhaśukenākarṇitaṃ yadvaca
Statprātargurusamnidhou nigadatastasyaiva tāraṃ vadhūḥ /
Karṇālambitapadmarāgaśakalaṃ vinyasya cañcūpuṭe
Vrīḍārtā prakaroti dāḍimaphalavyājena vāgbandhanam //
—Amaruśatakam, Verse—15,

[17] Prasthānaṃ valayaiḥ kṛtaṃ priyasakhairasramajasraṃ gataṃ
Dhṛtyā na kṣaṇamāsitaṃ vyavasitaṃ cittena gantuṃ puraḥ /
Yātuṃ niścitacetasi priyatame sarve samam prasthitā
Gantavye sati jīvita priyasuhṛtsārthaḥ kimu tyajyate //
—Amaruśatakam, Verse—32

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[18] Rātrou vāribharālasāmbudaravodvignena jātāśruṇā
Pānthenātmaviyogaduḥkhapiśunaṃ gītaṃ tathotkaṇṭhayā /
Āstāṃ jīvitahāriṇaḥ pravasanālāpasya saṃkīrtanaṃ
Mānasyāpi jalāñjaliḥ sarabhasaṃ lokena datto yathā //

—Amaru-Śataka, Verse—48.

[19] Desairantaritā Śataiśca saritāmurvībhṛtāṃ kānanair
Yatnenāpi na yāti locanapathaṃ kānteti jānannapi /
Utgrīvaścaraṇardharuddhavasudhaḥ pronmṛjya sāsrc dṛśou
Tāmāśāṃ pathikastathāpi kimapi dhyāyanmuhurvīkṣate //

—Amaruśatakam, Verse—72

The philosophy of love as introduced by Vyāsa thus appears through numerous transformations in the poetical creations of Kālidāsa and Amaru, and through them in compositions of poets of posterity at large. The soft sentiment receives attention of all such poets, who expend their energy in drawing the painting of the terrible and the sweet alike. The poetess Śilābhaṭṭārikā in a famous image drawn by her gives an ideal of the longing experienced by the lady to enjoy her lover : and a lesser known poet Bhavabhūti describes the peasant-couple as enjoying a sleep in leafy cottage by the side of the stack of barley placing their heads in pillows of straw.[20] Vyāsa describes the experience of the furious and soft by persons belonging to the highest strata of the society, born with a silver spoon in their mouth, who are accustomed to all sorts of enjoyments. In composition of poets of lesser importance, the reader is introduced for the first time to poverty, whose chill mars the spirit of their characters. But proverty is not able to put an end to the emergence of soft sentiments in them, since these are permanent moods, shared equally by members of the human society. A lesser known poet thus depicts the sorrow experienced by the house-wife for her inability to feed her children or for failure to protect the things of the household from incessant rains. Another poet of similar type draws a painting of great anxiety realised by the poor house-wife to maintain the cucumber or the brinjal, grown in the kitchen garden carefully till the return of her husband from abroad. There are other interesting images that give the reader an idea of the sorrow experienced by members of contemporary society to make their both ends meet.[21] In summer they are to plod on the red hot sand getting a burn injury in their toes,—in rains they are to move under the protection of the leaky and streaming umbrella and in winter they are to seek shelter from the scolding housewife, who is reluctant to extend shelter to them. As circumstances change, the mode of combating adverse forces undergoes a transformation. From the attempt to assert the right to property we come to the attempt to drag worldly existence with great difficulty. The difference between the society in which Vyāsa lived and that in which the lesser-known poet of comparatively later period breathed is marked; but inspite of this great diversity, the sentiments are handled with equal ease by both. The influence of the image of human heart, as presented in the Mahābhārata is clearly tracable in the paintings drawn by the poet of posterity. To know the multiminded man,—this bundle of complexities, consequently, it is necessary to cast our glances on the poetical images presented by Vyāsa.

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[20] Laghuni tṛṇakuṭīre kṣetrakoṇe yavānāṃ
Navakalamapalālasrastare sopadhāne /
Pariharati suṣuptaṃ hālikadvandvamārā—
Tstanakalaśamahoṣmābaddharekhastuṣārah //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse—1336

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[21] Kumbhīsaṃcitataṇḍulāḥ pratidinaṃ nītāḥ kṣayaṃ mūṣikair
Vāstuṣveva piśaṅgitodaratalāḥ sīryanti vārtākavaḥ /
Jīrṇaṃ jālakamāranālapiṭharīgarbhe ca kākāravaṃ
Dīnāyāḥ pathikasriyāḥ priyatamapratyāgamākāṃkṣayā //
—Saduktikarṇāmṛta, Verse—2243

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